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America's Greedy Elderly ANDREW SULLIVAN

OCTOBER 9, 2000

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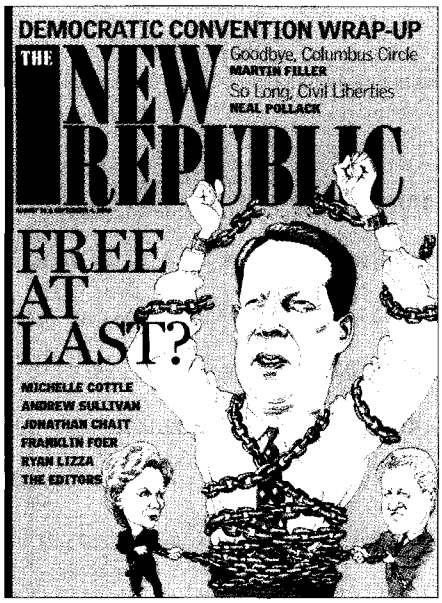
Benefits of the doubt

TO THE EDITORS:

Although I'm anything but an ardent fan of President Clinton's, I'm moved to protest Andrew Sullivan's rancorous and ungenerous appraisal of his record ("One Last Time," August 28 & September 4). Sullivan's main complaint seems to be that Clinton is a dishonest narcissist because he claims too much personal credit for policy successes (such as the healthy economy) achieved with the help of predecessors, aides and opponents, larger social forces, and chance events. But all politicians do this. What would Sullivan say of the infinitely more grandiose and ludicrous claims that Presidents Reagan and Bush personally brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of communism, and the end of the cold war? Next to such epic mythmaking efforts, Clinton's boasts look both modest and justified.

Among Sullivan's many small, savage distortions is one that particularly needs correction—that Clinton "blew all his political capital trying to socialize medicine." He blew it, all right, but on a health plan that was fearfully complicated because it was trying so hard *not* to socialize medicine. The Clinton health plan aimed for the centrist middle ground of "managed competition," with services financed from private employers' benefits paid to private insurance companies rather than from tax rolls and supplied through private doctors and hospitals. It called for a lot of government regulation, but any plan that tries to make privately financed and supplied health care universal and control its costs requires a lot of regulation. Clinton's plan failed for many reasons—among them, to be sure, his political mismanagement—but above all because of the success of business leaders and conservative demagogues in persuading many people (apparently including Sullivan) of the untruth that the plan would "socialize medicine."



ROBERT W. GORDON
Johnston Professor of Law and Professor of History
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

Flammable

TO THE EDITORS:

I found Neal Pollack's attack on police for infringing on protesters' civil rights a bit much ("Uncivil Action," August 28 & September 4). He says that "American cities have been taking drastic and often excessive measures to stifle dissent" and goes on to cite the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle and the International Monetary Fund/World Bank meeting in Washington, D.C., among others. Those protests were clearly intended to disrupt or prevent the meetings, interfering with the civil rights of the participants. Moreover, they destroyed property and appear to have harmed bystanders. Pollack dismisses the protesters' paint thinner as "used to make protest puppets" and accuses the police of falsely suggesting that the liquid might be used to make Molotov cocktails. Paint thinner is explosively flammable—just read the warnings on the label.

We live in a violent age in which world leaders get assassinated and public buildings get blown up. I want the police to discriminate between legitimate protest activity and violence, but it does not seem to me that they were out of line in what they did in the cited cases.

JOHN T. BENNETT
Alexandria, Virginia

TO THE EDITORS:

Neal Pollack is absolutely right about the over-the-top measures employed by the police recently to break up peaceful protest before it can start. Living near Washington, D.C., we saw the efforts of the local police and fire departments to remove protesters from their accommodations simply on the suspicion that they might do something wrong at some time. I'm generally against protesters breaking the law, but when police move to prevent peaceful protest, they only guarantee smaller, violent protest. If you are going to throw people in jail for picketing or bombing, most people won't picket, but a few will bomb.

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But this is a lesson to which liberals come late. Having pressed for severe criminal penalties against anti-abortion protesters, liberals are hardly in a position to worry about free speech and civil liberties. Anyone who supports the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances bill, which calls for jail time and huge fines for peaceful protest on or around clinic property, can hardly lodge complaints about police using fire-code violations as a tool against protesters.

KEVIN CLARK
Via the Internet

Dov bar

TO THE EDITORS:
Benjamin Soskis makes a fair point when he cautions against the presumption that an involuntary link exists between a politician's observance of religious ritual and his political probity ("Walking the Walk," August 28 & September 4). But in doing so he unfairly tarnishes the good residents of Brooklyn and our elected officials.

Soskis writes, "One doesn't even need to look to Israel for examples of politicians who walk to synagogue on Saturday and pilfer from the state during the week. In Brooklyn, as well, strictly Orthodox politicians have run afoul of the law." That is simply not true. While the religious politicians representing the various communities in Brooklyn have not always made me proud, that is not a crime. And while there was one instance in which an assemblyman was charged with a crime, he was acquitted. In any event, Soskis's use of the plural conveys a sense of a systemic problem that simply doesn't exist.

Perhaps more disappointing than Soskis's error is the manner in which he transposes onto the American Jewish scene an ill that (supposedly) exists in Israel. He, and other journalists, would do well to understand that the American and Israeli Jewish communities are not homogeneous.

AVI SCHICK
Brooklyn, New York

BENJAMIN SOSKIS REPLIES:
I'll concede that my description of "strictly Orthodox politicians" in Brooklyn "run[ning] afoul of the law" was ill-chosen. The politician to whom Schick refers, Borough Park Assemblyman Dov Hikind, was indeed acquitted in 1998 on bribery charges linked to a scandal at a local government-funded Jewish community council. But I reject the suggestion that I used the venality of Israeli Orthodox politicians to implicate those of Brooklyn as well. For, though Hikind himself was acquitted, even he admitted that the scandal, in which several of his associates pleaded guilty or were convicted, demonstrated that Orthodox Jews were not immune to shameful public conduct. As he recently told a reporter, "In spite of the fact that we should be at a higher standard, the reality is that everybody is all too human. People make mistakes." Only this—and I could have used any number of communities as examples—was my point: There is no automatic linkage between religious observance and public morals.

Identity politics

TO THE EDITORS:
Martin Peretz provides a fascinating account of the young Al Gore's avid effort to take the most challenging of Harvard's courses, including Erik Erikson's famous offering on identity and the life cycle ("Class Conflict," August 21). I had the good fortune of being at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences in 1964–1965, when Erikson was one of the fellows. I listened with absorption when he described the course, which was framed by a showing of Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*. It would be difficult, I thought, to imagine an academic experience more likely to have an enduring impact on its participants.

Gore not only availed himself of that curricular gem but also turned it to a highly personal end, writing a psychological study of his own father. What a contrast to George W. Bush, who is vociferous in his aversion to self-reflection and who devoted an Ivy League education to pranks and partying. All of this is of special interest to me as the author of a book on the eleven predecessors of the next president (*The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Clinton*). Early in the next administration, I will be writing a chapter on the new president for the book's paperback edition. If that chapter is on Gore, his encounter with Erikson will figure in the story. Given the destructive resources at the fingertips of the occupant of the Oval Office, an Eriksonian admonition for that individual might well be "President, know thyself." The young Gore was off to an excellent start.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Old Guard

BART AND LISA SIMPSON: Grampa, didn't you wonder why you were getting checks for doing nothing?
GRAMPA SIMPSON: I figured, 'cuz the Democrats were in power again.

—"The Simpsons," Episode 9F16

THIS IS SHAPING UP as Grampa Simpson's year. Al Gore is a smart man, and it doesn't take a genius to see why he has spent the last two months talking loudly to old people in pharmacies. Sixty-seven percent of retirees voted in 1996, compared to 49 percent of 25- to 44-year-olds and 32 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds. Every year, as their percentage of the population grows, so does seniors' political and economic clout. According to AARP, the number of retirees in our society is increasing by about 400 per day, as baby-boomers retire and old folks live longer. Within a couple of decades, the old will be unstoppable. In comparison, other special interest groups, like blacks or Jews or homosexuals, are puny. These demographics are not lost on politicians on either side of the debate. Gore knows that if he wins Florida, he wins the election. Republicans, post-Gingrich, know better than to mess with geezers. The lesson of 1996 was simple: Pander enough to the old, and electoral victory is yours.

But the scale of Gore's proposed largesse is impressive, even by recent bipartisan standards. Here's my best shot at what Gore's offering: no reform of the system whatsoever, no change in the age at which Medicare kicks in, penalties for any Medicare-catering HMOs that try to cut costs, a new prescription-drug entitlement that pays for unlimited coverage for any senior with expenses over $4,000 per year, free preventive tests twice as often as today, an end to co-payments for a range of nonurgent procedures, and on and on. The cost? Gore says his plan would cost $253 billion over the next ten years, although the Congressional Budget Office puts the price at $338 billion. But, hey, what's $85 billion between friends? Bush's plan is almost as feckless, subsidizing small premiums even for seniors who are multimillionaires. The projected costs depend, of course, on what happens to drug prices in the next decade, something no one can safely predict. But in 1999 prescription-drug costs under the federal government's health plan pushed premiums up by 10 percent, and private plans have seen costs rise by an average of 8 percent. Extrapolate that for a decade, multiply it to include all Medicare recipients, and you have a price tag in the trillions. If that doesn't constitute a "risky scheme," then I don't know what does.

But isn't there a pressing need to help our poor elderly? In a cosmic sense, of course there is. Who doesn't wince at the plight of older Americans struggling to afford co-payments for needed drugs? But responsible politicians care for the whole society, not just a part of it. According to the Census Bureau, the median net worth of retirees ($86,000) is some 15 times the net worth of those under 35 and three times as high as the net worth of "working families" 35 to 44. The poverty rate for people under 18 is now 17 percent, compared to less than 10 percent for the elderly, and the gap is growing. In the last eleven years, retirees have seen their median income grow 8 percent in real terms, while 15- to 24-year-olds have seen theirs tread water.

But haven't the elderly already paid their share? Nope. Today's generation of oldies are getting back far, far more in Social Security and Medicare benefits than they or their employers paid into the system—and far more than future generations will likely get in our not-so-golden years. The "greatest generation" is also one of the luckiest. Of course, that's not how they see it. There was a wonderful story the other day in *The New York Times* in which a reporter asked elderly people in Baltimore what they thought of the various plans to change, revamp, or expand Medicare. Surprise, surprise—all the seniors wanted was more of everything. "I have not only a regular internist," said Syd Goldfield, 71, "I have a urologist. I have a bone doctor. I have an eye doctor. Et cetera, et cetera. I know who I am seeing, and I like them. And I don't like to have a strange doctor working on me for anything." Another Baltimore senior citizen opined: "If you want the best, you have to pay. And I want the best." Fine, until you figure out what the meaning of the word "you" is.

The signs of elderly wealth are everywhere. According to AARP, personal discretionary income—i.e., money left over when necessities like rent, food, and clothes have been paid for—peaks among people in their sixties. Close to 20 percent of today's retirees have net worths of more than a quarter of a million dollars. The Department of Health and Human Services, journalist Michael Fumento reports, found that only 12 percent of the elderly suffer health problems, while 44 percent say they're enjoying the "best years of their lives." Moreover, only 10 percent spend more than $1,000 a year out-of-pocket on prescription drugs, and only 4 percent pay more than $2,000, according to University of Southern California economist Joel Hay. That's in an age group with a median net worth of $86,000. It may be a pain, but it sure isn't a crisis. Compared to a single mother in her thirties with diabetes in an HMO, it's a cakewalk.

In some ways, perhaps, we're living in an age of cultural transition for the old. We still think of them as poor, beleaguered codgers, when in fact they're increasingly fat, rested, and happy. Read AARP's glossy literature and you'll find a dazzling array of facts and figures to prove how vibrant, successful, and self-reliant today's geezers are: 46 percent claim to "eat pretty much what I want," 33 percent use airplanes to travel (a higher percentage than those under 50), 61 percent are brand-loyal for mayonnaise, and so on. Grampa Simpson, as ever, had his finger on the pulse in one of his letters to "the sickos at *Modern Bride*": "When I read your magazine, I don't—I don't see one wrinkled face or a single toothless grin," he spluttered. "For shame!" AARP wants us to believe that the elderly are doing great, and they are. But they also want us to see them as victims ordering ibuprofen from the vet. Surely something has to give.

My own completely quixotic proposal is a kind of welfare reform for the old. Raise the retirement age to 68; means-test Social Security; and devolve Medicare, Bush-style, to the private sector. If we need to expand health care entitlements, we should do so only for the very poor—the people with the least resources to care for themselves. To pay for it, we should encourage the old not to sit back and collect checks but to bite the bullet of their own self-proclaimed vigor and get a job. The culture of dependency is not restricted to poor welfare mothers; it includes wealthy welfare seniors. Liberals used to worry about this income shift from young to old, from (often) black and Hispanic working poor to the mainly white, elderly rich. But that has somehow been forgotten in a battle to pander to the already pampered middle class.

Gore is right about one thing in this election. This is a battle between the people and the powerful. It's just that on this issue, at least, he's for the wrong side.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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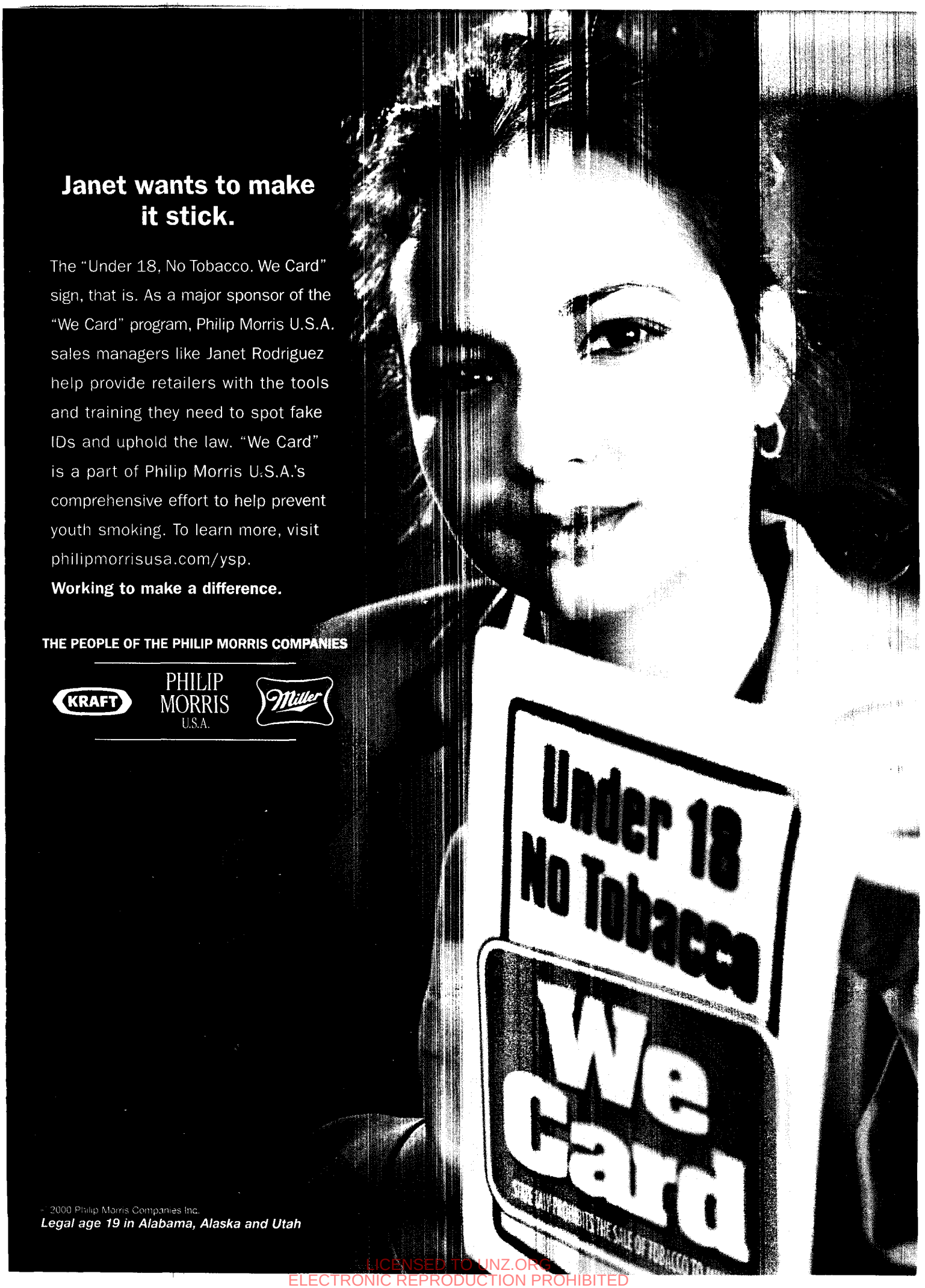

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Bedtime for Slobo

IN ALL THE years of Slobodan Milosevic's depredations, which began with authoritarian rule and culminated in the restoration of radical evil to the experience of Europe, his hold on power in Belgrade was a great, grim perplexity. How was it that the cynical Serbian chauvinist who presided over mass expulsions and mass murders, who established concentration camps after concentration camps were never again to be established, met with so little disapproval from his own people? Where were the decent men and women of Serbia, the ones who could recognize that they were witnessing a moral and historical disaster and mount a challenge to it? Was Serbian nationalism all there was to Serbian politics? The inglorious career of the Serbian opposition was deeply troubling—for practical reasons, since it made a change of regime in Belgrade seem less and less likely, and for philosophical reasons, since it tempted observers of Milosevic's Serbia to think about collective guilt and collective responsibility. Not even the catastrophe in Kosovo seemed to trouble Serbs sufficiently to throw the bastard out.

Until this week, that is. In an election that Milosevic called on the mercifully erroneous assumption that it would consolidate his power, he lost. Better, he lost decisively. According to monitors from the Democratic Opposition of Serbia, Vojislav Kostunica received 54.6 percent of the vote cast on September 24, and Slobodan Milosevic received 35 percent of it. The outcome was so incontrovertible, in fact, that Milosevic found himself unable to resort to a Big Lie, and had to propound instead a Less Big Lie: The government conceded that the opposition had won more of the popular vote than the president, but insisted that it hadn't reached 50 percent, and demanded a second ballot. The opposition quite properly refused to acquiesce in this polite theft of the election. They have responded with daily rallies in the streets of Serbia's big cities demanding that the results of the election be accepted, and the crowds are growing in size and in vehemence.

As of this writing, there is much speculation about what Milosevic might do next: He can stall, he can use his troops to disperse the crowds, he can use his troops to start a war in Montenegro. (A bellicose Serbian nationalism has always been his ace in the hole.) The premise of all the speculation is that the president is a "master tactician." But a master tactician would not have called for such a referendum on his own rule, a rule that brought about the dismemberment of his state, and the isolation of his state from the European community, and the devastation of the infrastructure of his state by NATO's warplanes when his fiendish actions in Kosovo finally became too much to bear. A master tactician would not have arranged for bombs to fall on his own cities. A master tactician would not have believed that his people could be humiliated forever. There is even talk that the army, too, has had enough. This time Milosevic appears to have lost the repugnant legitimacy that for so long he enjoyed. And not even the defeat of the Serbs in 1389 will bring it back.

We do not mean to be too sanguine. The restive streets of Belgrade in 2000 should not be mistaken for the restive streets of Prague in 1989. Kostunica owes his success not least to the ferocity of his own expressions of national (and anti-American) feeling. Tribalism has not yet been usurped by democracy in Serbia. But the news is still good, because so much of the misery of the Balkans in the 1990s was visited upon it by this one foul man, and he is down. The West must continue its active support of the opposition, and forcefully rehearse its promise to lift the sanctions against Serbia if the results of this election are honored and Serbia proceeds upon an anti-Milosevic course. It turns out, again, that sanctions sometimes work, if not by the poverty that they bring (people will endure great hardship for a cause) then by the pariahdom that they bring.

Was Kosovo worth it? In recent months, this question has been frequently asked, not least by George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, who have made it perfectly plain that in the face of Milosevic's barbarism they would have done nothing. Timothy Garton Ash recently asked the question in *The New York Review of Books*, and answered it with a question of his own: "Will Milosevic prove to be Europe's Galtieri (the Argentinian president deposed after losing the Falklands war) or Europe's Saddam Hussein? At the moment, he looks more like Europe's Saddam. But we shall see." No, we have already seen. The Bosnian war and the Kosovo war were nothing like the Falklands war, because they broached first principles, the moral and political foundations of the West. That is what the architects of Operation Allied Force understood. Surely the exasperations of policing a divided Kosovo pale before the catastrophe that we stopped. And surely the critics who argued that Operation Allied Force would only strengthen Milosevic have been proved wrong. Evil turns out to have been bad policy. ■

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NOTEBOOK

HISTORY, SHMISTORY: Bill Clinton, and maybe Ehud Barak too, is watching his peace-pursuing days in office dwindle—while Yasir Arafat plays his old game of ideological bluster and political cowardice—and so they appear to have hit on a bold method for breaking the deadlock. The method is amnesia. According to Aluf Benn in *Ha'aretz*, the bright new idea is that the question of sovereignty over the Temple Mount should be settled by awarding the prize to the permanent members of the Security Council. The solution is . . . the United Nations! The notion was first floated by Clinton in the drizzly closing days of the Camp David summit. Then the Egyptian government kindled to it. Kofi Annan expressed his interest. And Barak tried to enlist the support of France, in a series of conversations with Jacques Chirac. According to Benn's report, Barak was especially keen to bring France on board because it is one of the Big Five and is not "'suspected' of a favorable tilt toward Israel." That is true enough, though one would have thought that the history of France's Middle Eastern diplomacy (most recently its ardent advocacy of Iraq) would have stayed the prime minister's hand. But never mind the history of France in the region. Recall, rather, the history of the United Nations in the region. Why would anybody with even the most rudimentary knowledge of the past entrust the eternal flash point of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the U.N.? Barak likes to point out that the U.N. has apologized for its condemnations of Zionism, and that Israel's standing in the international body has improved. Well, it has not altogether improved: After 40 years of exclusion from any of the U.N.'s regional groups, Israel was offered temporary membership in WEOG, the "Western European and Other Group," and this temporary membership was granted on condition that Israel renounce any aspiration to any influential seats at the U.N., including on the Security Council. Israel, in short, is still not an equal member of the U.N. And so Barak's confidence in the U.N. is inexplicable. He is like a man on a sunny day who cannot imagine rain. Among the Big Five, after all, the proven friends of Israel are in the minority. Russia, China, and France have different inclinations. And what if the composition of the Security Council were to change, and the U.N. peacekeepers at the Temple Mount were one day, all of a sudden, withdrawn? (The proximate cause of the Six Day War in 1967 was precisely such an abject U.N. withdrawal.) But perhaps the weakness of the U.N. is the good news, not the bad news. When it comes to peacekeeping, the U.N. is spectacularly incompetent. This was one of the great lessons of the 1990s, except that it does not seem to have been learned. Even as the notion of deploying blue helmets around the gold dome was being floated, and the U.N. was marking its "millennium summit" in New York with promises to end world poverty and bring world peace, it was reported that the U.N. could not muster the troops that it needed in Sierra Leone, where there is a real emergency. So the feckless in Turtle Bay may never get it together to be feckless on the Temple Mount. No, the immediate reason for worry is not the feckless in New York, but the reckless in Washington and Jerusalem.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: Martin Indyk, the U.S. ambassador to Israel—now forbidden to enter his own embassy (in Tel Aviv, where he fought feverishly to keep it) or even to set foot in the State Department without a security detail—has long been known for his hauteur. He had been warned many times that he was compromising American interests (and, coincidentally, the safety of Israel) by routinely using an ordinary laptop computer to receive and to write classified documents. The warnings had no effect, and so his communications and his notes about the always-delicate Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were open-book vulnerable to Israel's enemies. Since he is one of Madeleine Albright's allies in trying to squeeze every last concession from the Barak government (not that it seems to require much squeezing), the secretary of state overlooked Indyk's infractions until Senator Richard Shelby, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, pressured her to make good on her new get-tough policy on State Department security. Needless to say, the Foggy Bottom establishment and the anything-goes-for-the-peace-process crowd are pooh-poohing Indyk's indifference to the rules. But nobody has explained why what was deemed extremely serious in the case of former CIA Director John Deutsch (who also used an unprotected computer for classified documents) is not extremely serious in the case of Indyk. The truth is that Indyk violated more than commonsense national security procedures. He infringed upon the one rule that the nation has a right to expect its emissaries will scrupulously follow: to report honestly to Washington about the politics of the country to which they have been dispatched. He was so invested in yet another agreement between Israel and the Palestinians that he led his bosses in Washington to believe that the Israeli polity would accept virtually any terms President Clinton might propose. He is partly responsible, therefore, for the constant American surprise at the reality of Israeli politics and the mixture of hope and skepticism with which many Israelis view the grand finale now being contemplated. The ambassador in Tel Aviv should have known that in the wake of Barak's performance at Camp David—with the magnitude of its concessions and the method of its diplomacy—his support in Israel would plummet. But Indyk was among those who helped delude Barak himself: The ambassador dazzled the Israelis and especially their military with the prospects of an American-financed reconfiguration of their entire defense structure. The price tag for this revolution would reach the tens of billions, an amount nobody on Capitol Hill would even consider. Indyk, his bosses, and even his Israeli hosts do not appear to grasp that the role of an ambassador is not the role of a peace processor. A peace processor puts the end of conflict above every country's interest. An ambassador should put nothing before his nation's own interest. It is time for Indyk to be retired, and not just because he does national security business on the same laptop you see every day on the train from Greenwich to Grand Central.

LOWER AND LOWER: Pundits have rightly scored Al Gore for calling for the release of oil from the Strategic

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Petroleum Reserve—noting that, as an environmentalist, he should not feed America's overconsumption of oil by treating every price hike as a national emergency. But if Gore's actions are hypocritical, Ralph Nader's criticisms of them may be even worse. Nader called Gore's proposal "too little, too late," saying it's "not enough" to lower oil prices. Maybe so, but why on earth would Nader want to lower oil prices? After all, the Green Party platform calls for action to "phase out ... fossil fuels" and demands that America reduce auto-based transportation. The way toward those goals is not cheaper oil; it's more expensive oil. Of course, that principled position might not play well in Michigan and Wisconsin in October, which is probably why Nader is abandoning it. Perhaps he has the makings of a viable presidential candidate after all.

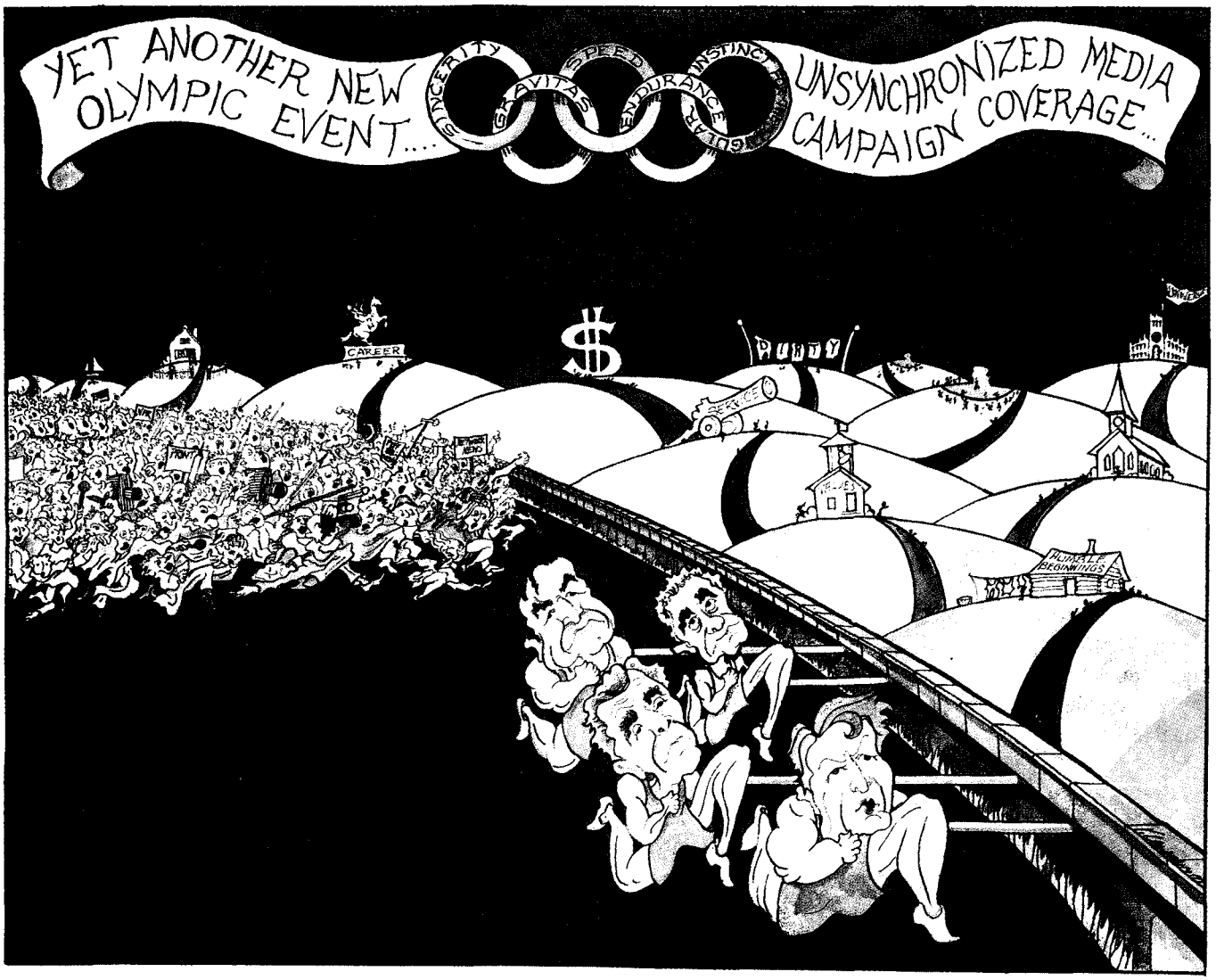
TALMUDIC SCHOLARS WATCH CONT'D: "There were times when he was standing next to me that I thought he was Amos or Jeremiah. Instead, we have Seinfeld."
—Bill Bennett on Joe Lieberman, to *Salon*, September 26

CROSSFIRE: "I think there's a tendency in the media business to write [candidate] obituaries before they should be written."
—Howard Fineman on MSNBC's "The News," September 21

"If we have a bias of any kind, it's that we like to see a contest, and we like to see it down the end if we can."
—same pundit, same show, same day

MAKING BOOK: We are proud to announce the publication of *Leon Battista Alberti, Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance* (Hill & Wang) by Anthony Grafton, master humanist and contributing editor; and of *Five Portraits: Modernity and the Imagination in Twentieth-Century German Writing* (Northwestern University Press) by Michael André Bernstein, who first painted these fresh and learned portraits of Rilke, Musil, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Celan in these pages; and of *False Papers* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) by André Aciman, some of whose true papers also appeared in these pages. ■

VINT'S WEEK



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Gail Sheehy, journalism's id.

Analyze This

By Franklin Foer

For two days this month, the media fixed its attention on George W. Bush's ability to read. On at least three separate occasions, the Texas governor was asked point-blank if he suffers from dyslexia, as an article in *Vanity Fair* had suggested. And, on three separate occasions, he denied it. But his denials didn't stem the speculation, which found its way into *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, the Associated Press, the *Chicago Tribune*, "Larry King Live," "Good Morning America," and numerous other organs of the Fourth Estate.

There were many reasons to pay the story no mind. For starters, there was the flimsy supporting evidence: a quote from the former head of the Maryland branch of the International Dyslexia Association (who made no claims to have met Bush); Bush's idealization of Winston Churchill, who was likely dyslexic; and the author's observation that "dyslexics are sometimes the loudmouths in school. At Andover, Bush was nicknamed 'the Lip.'" But there was an even better reason to ignore the story—the author herself, *Vanity Fair* correspondent Gail Sheehy, a journalist with a world-class reputation for getting it wrong.

It's not hard to understand why a glossy like *Vanity Fair* would publish Sheehy's work: She delivers buzz. But the willingness of the higher-minded reporters at the *Times* and elsewhere to pick up her assertions and run with them reflects a broader trend: Her brand of journalism has gone mainstream. Over the past decade, the prestige newspapers have borrowed heavily from the psychobiographical approach she pioneered, interpreting the candidates through their childhood traumas, midlife crises, and pathologies. In 1993, David Maraniss of *The Washington Post* won a Pulitzer for his biography of Bill Clinton, which unabashedly pecred inside the president's mind to study the impact of his bawdy mother. This election cycle has produced more of the same, with the *Times* and the *Post* apparently in competition to see who can devote more column inches to Bush's past drinking problem and Gore's paralyzing relationship with his father. Of course, good reporters like Maraniss and the *Times*' Nicholas Kristof carefully refrain from recklessly diagnosing psychological maladies. But once the papers have legitimized Sheehy's style, they can't easily shun the sensational tidbits she uses it to find.

Sheehy first gained national prominence in the 1970s as a reporter for *New York* magazine (whose editor at the time, Clay Felker, she later married). In 1971, Sheehy's five-part series "Redpants and Sugarman," which detailed the travails of a Lexington Avenue prostitute and her pimp, won raves. *Newsweek* declared her the "hooker's Boswell." But Sheehy was soon forced to admit that there was no "Redpants." Her subject, she explained, was a "composite"—a fact never acknowledged in any of her published stories.

For a time, the controversy dogged Sheehy. But in 1976 she published a book of pop psychology called *Passages*, and its wild success—three years on *The New York Times*' best-seller list—gave her career a powerful boost. The thesis of *Passages*—that adulthood is a series of "critical turning points along the life cycle when one's vulnerability is exaggerated but one's opportunity for growth is also heightened"—became Sheehy's totalizing theory of character.

After being recruited to profile presidential contenders for *Vanity Fair* in 1983, Sheehy began applying the formula to political figures. For years, she bolstered the pop psychoanalysis with delicious reportorial scoops—Michael Dukakis's mentally unstable brother, Gary Hart's love of New Age hokum. But, over time, the scoops became scarcer and the psychologizing more forced. In her 1990 biography of Mikhail Gorbachev, *The Man Who Changed the World*, Sheehy notoriously suggested that the collapse of communism was caused by the Soviet leader's own confrontations with adversity: "For exceptional individuals, like Gorbachev," she wrote, "such passages assume the dimensions of deep personal transformation—they become in some ways different people." Worse than its ridiculous thesis, the book suffered from a slew of telling errors. Sheehy described organized crime as nonexistent in post-Soviet life—just as it was asserting itself as a dominant force. She argued that diabetes would be "widespread in a closed ethnic society such as Russia where people marry and reproduce, for the most part, with other Russians"—never mind that there is, genetically speaking, no such thing as a Russian. The errors were both picayune and grand: suggesting Potemkin was an actual architect; miscalculating the length of Mongol rule over Russia by at least 100 years; badly botching the names of scientific journals, artistic movements, and political figures. Reviewing Sheehy's book in these pages, Tatyana Tolstaya concluded, "The number of illiterate mistakes in this book is beyond counting."

By the time Sheehy wrote her 1999 biography of Hillary Clinton, *Hillary's Choice*, finding her errors had become a kind of journalistic game. *The Washington Post*'s "Reliable Source" column kept a running tab, called "Gail's Goofs Corner." Pieces in *The New York Observer* and *The Nation*, uncovering a slew of other slipups, piled on. And a list of eminences came forward to claim that Sheehy had either invented quotes or twisted them out of context. (A sampling: Garry Wills, Harold Ickes, Betsy Wright.) To be fair, the mistakes were not all earth-shattering. (Does it really matter that Sheehy wrongly asserted that Mack McLarty had divorced his wife or incorrectly described the columnist Gene Lyons as a novelist?) At least one of her goofs, however, seriously undermined her argument—the claim that Hillary Clinton suffered irreparable psychological damage when her father skipped her college graduation speech. ("It should have been the peak of pride for her father," Sheehy wrote. "But Hillary's father was competitive with his gifted daughter.") When Hillary's press secretary aggressively asserted that her father had indeed attended her graduation, Sheehy swiftly back-

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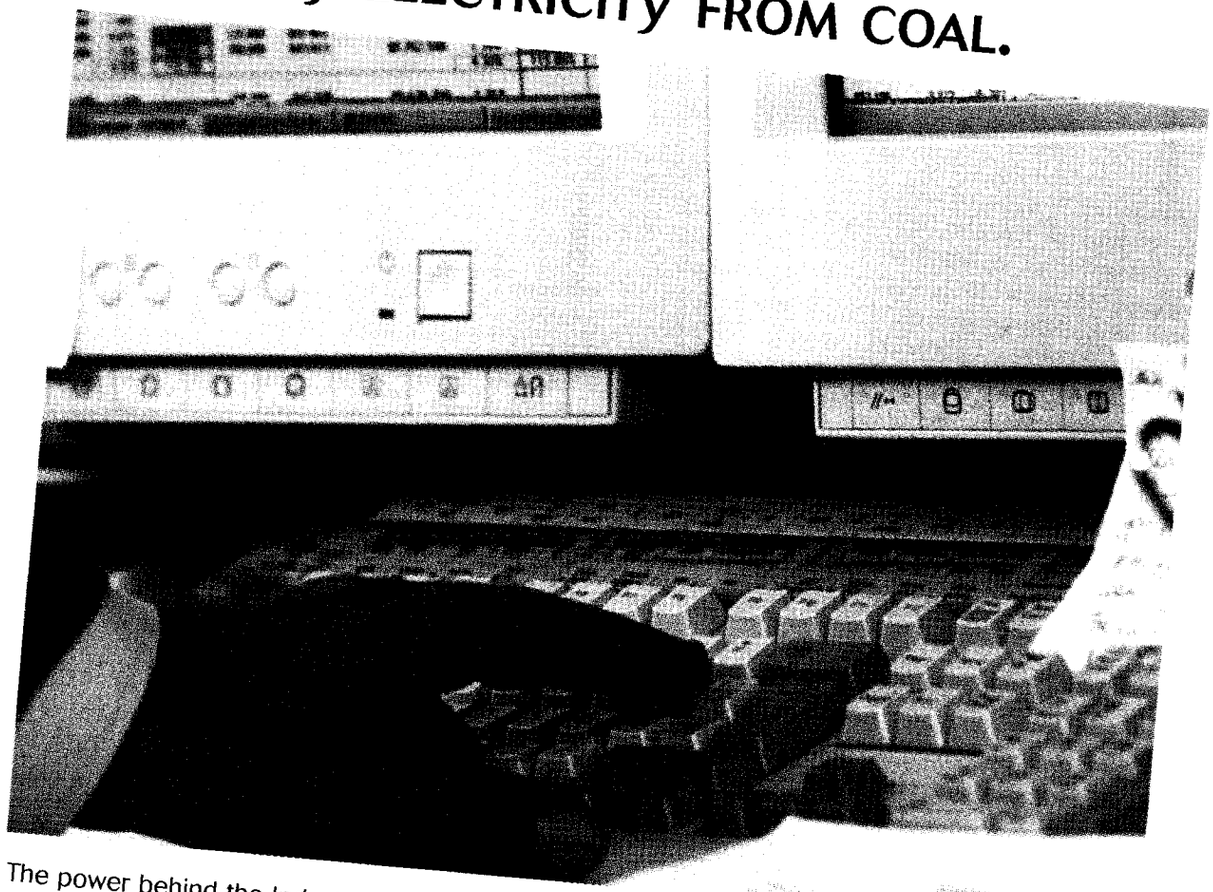

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pedaled. In the paperback version of *Hillary's Choice*, she minimized the anecdote: "Hugh Rodham was not seen hugging or congratulating his daughter." Asked by Tim Russert whether she stood by her original contention that Hugh Rodham was not there at all, she replied, "We don't know."

HOW DO SUCH mistakes happen? In part, it's simply impossible to verify Sheehy's work: Her suggestion that Bill Clinton's adultery results from "dissociative identities," for instance, is, on its face, unfalsifiable. But talk to her past *Vanity Fair* fact-checkers—I spoke with three—and they provide other explanations for Sheehy's lapses. "She'll just misconstrue the whole context of what someone is trying to say, or she'll flip words around to advance her argument that this person has a particular psychological problem," one told me. "She has very little regard for her sources," said another. All admit that Sheehy tried to ignore their objections—telling one, "You're just a fucking fact-checker. Don't tell me what to do." (Sheehy disputes the phrasing—"I don't usually use that language," she told me—but not the sentiment. "I might have said, 'You're just a fact-checker, you're not the writer, don't tell me what to do.' That would be perfectly in order.")

Sheehy's best-known disagreement with *Vanity Fair*'s fact-checkers, however, was over her 1992 profile of Hillary Clinton. In the piece, Sheehy quoted the soon-to-be first lady complaining that, for all the coverage of her husband's alleged affairs, President Bush had himself been "carrying on" his own illicit tryst, "which is apparently well-known in Washington." When Hillary claimed the quote was "a garbled version of a private conversation," no one believed her. ("I don't think you tell a journalist about a private conversation if you don't want to have it printed," replied Sheehy.) But Clinton was in the right. Last December, Cynthia Cotts, who had been a *Vanity Fair* fact-checker in 1992, revealed that, according to Sheehy's transcript, Hillary had unambiguously declared her remarks off the record. But when Cotts (now *The Village Voice*'s media critic) recommended to editors that Sheehy cut the quote, she was rebuffed.

Ironically, as Sheehy's psychobabble has grown ever flimsier, more and more journalists have adopted her style themselves. George W. Bush alone has been the subject of three full-scale campaign biographies that dwell almost entirely on matters characterological. Even Kristof's profiles in *The New York Times*, running under the New Agey title "Governor Bush's Journey," peddle their share of dime-store psych: "[O]ne theme runs through each stage of his life: hero worship of his father, leading to an instinct to follow his father's trail." As *Slate*'s Judith Shulevitz puts it, "The question of whether and how a politician has grown in his or her adult years has become the master narrative of American politics."

But if the trend toward journalism as amateur psychology makes it easier for Sheehy to get her nuggets picked up in the mainstream press, it also makes her life harder. In fact, one reason for Sheehy's increasing sensationalism may be the competition: With so many reporters now on her turf, her discoveries have to be more and more outrageous to stand out. Unfortunately, she keeps descending to the challenge. ■

Why losing will be the least of W.'s problems.

The Day After

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

LOSING A PRESIDENTIAL election is never pleasant. But what comes afterward can either soothe the pain or make it indescribably worse. In 1996, for instance, Bob Dole emerged from his landslide loss as a Beltway elder statesman, not to mention a lovable, handsomely paid pitchman for corporations like Visa and Pfizer. Then there's Michael Dukakis—whose defeat in 1988 merely initiated the hellish denouement of his political career. Returning to his duties as Massachusetts governor, the Duke was welcomed home by a metastasizing budget crisis, furious legislators, a derisive press, and voters embarrassed by campaign-generated publicity about their fetid harbor and rampaging Willie Hortons. By the end of his lame-duck term, Dukakis was fending off a coup attempt by his ambitious lieutenant governor, who tried to hijack state fiscal policy while Dukakis was overseas on a trade mission. The years since have brought only political oblivion and gratuitous public ridicule.

George W. Bush: This could be your life. While Al Gore certainly won't be happy if he loses, at least he can retire to his Tennessee farm for a few months of introspection and, inevitably, another deep-thinking book. Bush's booby prize, by contrast, will be a return to the Austin statehouse—where, given the array of headaches waiting for him, he could face political misery. Bush often says he'll be able to handle an election-night defeat. But can he handle what will come next?

Should Bush lose in November, he will have two years left as governor (he is free to run again in 2002 but has said he won't). But it's doubtful he'll have much chance to expand—or, if you prefer, build—his legacy in that time. For one thing, the Texas legislature meets only every other year, which means that its 2001 session will be Bush's last. What's more, according to Austin insiders, W. has been so distracted by his presidential campaign that his aides have only just started thinking about a possible agenda for that session.

But Bush's enemies are much further along. Although W. has enjoyed considerable bipartisan goodwill in Austin, much of it has been because Democrats and conservative Republicans held their tongues for fear of alienating a future president. Should Bush lose, those inhibitions will disappear. Says Harvey Kronberg, publisher of the *Quorum Report*, an insider political newsletter in Austin: "Bush will be welcomed back enthusiastically. There will be a standing ovation at the State of the State speech [in January], a lot of pride—and then the knives get drawn." Religious conservatives, Kronberg says, will no longer soft-pedal their anti-gay, anti-divorce agenda for fear of embarrassing Bush on the stump. Meanwhile, Texas Democrats, eager for a comeback, won't

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have to fear looking like traitors to their state if they go on the attack.

As they try to shatter Bush's cherished reputation as a compassionate conservative, Democrats will have a convenient head start: Al Gore's assault on Texas's health care system and environmental record. For months, the Texas media has been filled with Gore-generated accounts of the state's failings, and some think the politicos in Austin will feel obliged to respond. "All of the adverse publicity for the state of Texas brought on by the campaign may well occasion the governor and the legislature revisiting some of those issues," says Bruce Buchanan, a government professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Democrats say they will push for reforms to erase the state's newly revived image as a backwater. "The things that came up in the presidential campaign are going to be on our agenda," says Representative Garnet F. Coleman, a Houston Democrat often critical of Bush. In particular, Bush will be pressured to respond to a federal judge's August ruling—instantly turned into a stinging Gore campaign advertisement—that the state has done a miserable job of signing up uninsured children for Medicaid. "Can he come back and show us that 'compassionate conservative' was not just spin?" asks Texas Democratic Party Chairwoman Molly Beth Malcolm.

And if the legacy of Gore's attacks doesn't wreck Bush's reputation for bipartisanship, redistricting might. With party control of both the state House and Senate teetering in the balance and as many as five congressional seats riding on how the legislature draws district lines, the battle between Democrats and Republicans will be especially ferocious. Several Texas politicos say the legislature could send Bush a plan favoring Democrats. Signing it would alienate GOP diehards, but vetoing it and turning the decision over to a heavily Republican-appointed board would lose Bush the conservative Democratic legislators he's counted on for support.

FINALLY, BUSH'S RECORD of fiscal responsibility—based on a pleasant combination of economic growth and tax cuts—will be endangered by a hemorrhaging budget. As Gore happily pointed out earlier this summer, Texas overspent its budget by a whopping $610 million this year, and there are signs that Medicaid and prison costs will continue to spiral upward. Thus, even as he's compelled to enroll more children in Medicaid, Bush could also feel pressure to slow the program's growth. The state's education-funding system is also under strain, with property taxes booming and pressure growing for a controversial tax overhaul—which Bush was unable to push through in 1997. In Texas, the era of government surpluses and easy choices is probably over.

Complicating Bush's efforts on all these fronts is the loss of his fabled political tutor and crafty statehouse sidekick, former Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock, who died last year. Bullock, a Democrat, was a hugely influential power broker who helped Bush stay on good terms with Democrats in the legislature. Now he has been replaced by Rick Perry, who not only is a Republican but has designs on the top job himself. Indeed, Perry won't be exactly thrilled to see Bush come home. A Bush victory would make Perry acting governor, giving him a launchpad for the 2002 election, when he may face a primary challenge from Texas's cheerleader turned senator, Kay Bailey Hutchison. But if Bush returns, his lieutenant governor may not show him much goodwill. Last year, when Bush wanted to keep a hate-crime bill from landing in his lap, Perry dived on the grenade, convincing legislators to abandon the fight—even though some believe he personally wanted such a bill to pass. "Perry had to eat a lot of crow last year to comply with Bush's aspirations," Kronberg says. "It was a source of irritation." If he's stuck being lieutenant governor for two more years, few people expect Perry to do Bush any more such favors.

All of which would seem to be enough to make W. put away that fluffy pillow and work overtime until November. On the other hand, Bush might find a potential bright side to defeat. It would allow him to begin maneuvering for the job he has always coveted, perhaps even more than the presidency: commissioner of Major League Baseball. ■

Prague Dispatch

Culture War

By TAMARA STRAUS

IT WAS THE day before the opening of the fifty-fifth annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and, in an abandoned shipyard on the outskirts of Prague, a multinational group of activists converged to plan the conference's demise. Calling themselves "The Initiative Against Economic Globalization," the protesters settled on a strategy: The next day, when government ministers gathered at the Congress Center in downtown Prague, the protesters would surround the building and demand that the trapped delegates either reform or abolish their institutions. There was only one hitch: Not all of the protesters believed the plan would work.

While the German activists were gung ho—"*Ja*, we will get into that place of pigs," crowed a Berliner named Hans, "there is nothing that can stop us"—the Italians had their doubts. "*Pazzo* [crazy]. This is *pazzo*," worried Luigi, who had come to Prague with a group of activists from Venice. "Tomorrow is the day we go to slaughter." The Greek and Turkish protesters were similarly dubious. "I will do it," said a big-eyed woman from Istanbul. "But I am scared."

Welcome to the anti-globalization movement's newest challenge. While the thousands of young activists from North America and Europe who swarmed Prague this week shared similar views on the global finance regime—"Kill the IMF!" they repeatedly chanted—and a romantically bedraggled dress code—cargo pants and piercings were much in evidence—they also shared a deep conviction that the cultural characteristics of individual countries must be preserved in the face of homogenizing global capitalism.

TAMARA STRAUS is a freelance writer based in San Francisco.

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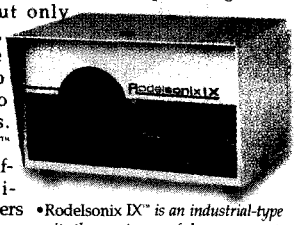

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Which raises a problem not unlike the one the Confederacy faced during the Civil War: How do you organize a movement whose members are philosophically committed to disunity?

CONSIDER THE APPROXIMATELY 800 Italian protesters in Prague. Most belonged to a group that supports the Zapatista rebels in Mexico and therefore goes by the Spanish name Ya Basta! ("Enough Is Enough!"). With their matching white bodysuits, helmets, and water guns—not to mention neatly packed bags of lemons and face creams to defend themselves against tear gas—they appeared armed for battle. But, demonstrating their country's penchant for elaborate getups, the Italians were also intent on cutting dashing figures. "They are not so interested in storming the conference center," griped one American protester before the march. "What they really like is to have their picture taken." In the end, the Italians proved themselves capable of playing more than one role. After the face-off at the Congress Center, when some groups joined other protests in Prague, members of Ya Basta! could be seen lounging photogenically in the arms and bosom of a Baroque bronze statue as cameramen clicked away.

Then there were the Germans. Unlike the Italians, they tended to focus on combat. German anarchists and radicals made up much of the so-called blue group, the most strident of the protesters—some of whom hurled stones at the police guarding the Congress Center. "We will join the blues with those British Earth First! people," Peter, a lanky Hamburg resident, told me the morning of the protests. "They may be Greens, but they don't mind a little violence."

The French were out in force, too. But, confirming the stereotype, they seemed more prone to theorizing about the protests than actually joining in. As thousands marched down central Prague's Sokolska Boulevard chanting anti-globalization slogans, many a Frenchman could be seen chatting with his comrades. "There are no borders," a Parisian student named Charles, who had come to Prague with a French unemployment-assistance organization, told me dreamily. "We have a collective [consciousness]. The colors [representing the three protest groups]—the anarchists, the socialists, the pacifists—are, you see, the colors of life."

Although relations between this mishmash of global youth were generally friendly, moments of subtle horror did occur. When a group of grungy American women—dressed as ragtag cheerleaders—rose from the crowd at the end of the pre-protest meeting, an Italian man cried out, "*Mamma mia*! Such sadness." Several Czech women were similarly unnerved upon encountering a Spaniard who roved the protest grounds naked with his penis poking through a dollar bill. "And I thought Prague made no sense under communism," said Lena, a student at Charles University.

The Americans (particularly those from the West Coast) had their own complaints. "They smoke constantly," said one young woman from San Francisco, referring to a nearby group from a Greek telecom union. "It *is* beautiful here," chimed in her female companion from Palo Alto. "But I would prefer if there were more vegetables."

The most noteworthy cultural characteristic on display, though, was Czech restraint in dealing with the protesters. No doubt remembering their own recent history of dissent, Czech officials took pains to be accommodating. The Prague police force, which had grown from 6,000 to 11,000 for the IMF/World Bank meetings, stayed remarkably calm, using tear gas and water cannons only when protesters attacked them or vandalized property. And, even then, many protesters seemed sympathetic. "We don't think they have been so brutal," said Peter, a political science student from Budapest. "They have a very bad job today." Then, as if to explain the kid gloves, he added, "You must remember that this place has a different history."

And it wasn't just the Czech police who killed the protesters with kindness. Jan Kasl, the mayor of Prague, said on Czech radio: "Please be strong in your demands, demonstrate according to your beliefs, but be kind with the city and obey the laws." Responding to the smashing of windows at Prague's downtown McDonald's, Czech Prime Minister Milos Zeman quipped, "I am with the protesters on one thing: I am against fast food." On this, it seemed, everyone could agree. ■

Campaign Journal

Silence Is Golden

By MICHELLE COTTLE

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

THE POWERS THAT BE say George W. Bush is back on track. He's gained ground in the polls, and press reports are calling him reenergized, refocused, on message. But, here at the Magic Carpet Aviation Hangar, W. doesn't look particularly revitalized. In fact, dripping with sweat in the swampy Florida heat, he looks as if he may pass out. The Bush camp has been touting the Texas governor's unscripted interactions with voters—a return to the town-hall meetings they wheeled out for 15 minutes in February to combat John McCain's "Mr. Accessibility" image. But this morning "unscripted" and "interactive" aren't exactly the terms that leap to mind. W. stands at center stage, strategically surrounded by—but not chatting with—scores of old folks, delivering a fairly ho-hum speech impugning Al Gore's trustworthiness and trumpeting (but offering few details of) the "huge differences" between his vision and the vice president's. When the speech is over, W. kisses a few cheeks, declines questions from either the audience or the traveling press, then dashes back to the safety of his campaign plane.

All in all, it's a splendid illustration of why Bush is on the comeback trail. The reporters covering the event may leave sweaty and bored, but, come afternoon, they still have to file their stories. And, when they sit down to compose the daily dispatch from Bushland, they have little choice but to transcribe dutifully the least-canned tidbits from W.'s stump speech. Hence, the big Bush news in the next day's papers is

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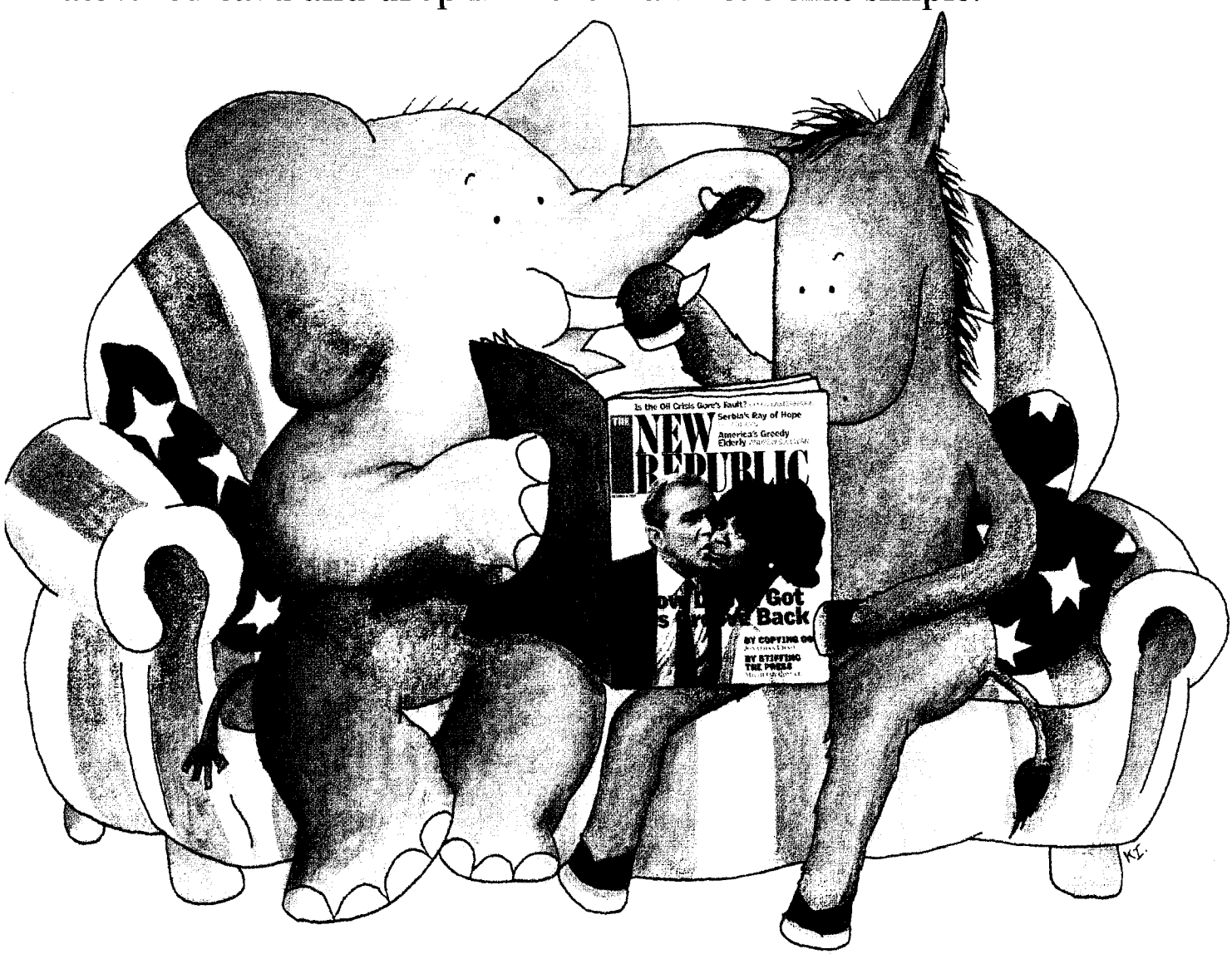

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the candidate's quippy slap at Gore's support for tapping the strategic oil reserve: "He's using it as if it's the strategic *po-li-ti-cal* reserve."

Over the past couple of weeks, the Bush campaign has learned a critical lesson: Screw the press. For months, the Bushies tried to charm the Fourth Estate. Staffers sent the candidate to the back of his campaign plane to give journalists an intimate, unrehearsed view of the man they felt sure the newshounds would grow to love. But, after a series of unfortunate gaffes ruthlessly recorded by the media jackals, the Bush campaign had an epiphany: Don't love the press, starve it.

Having gleefully and repeatedly slammed Gore for his lack of media accessibility—including regular mass e-mails noting how many days reporters have been "held hostage" waiting for a press conference with the veep—the Bush folks are following suit. Gone are W.'s on-the-record bull sessions at the back of the plane. Gone are the free-form "media availabilities" along the trail. In their place are softball interviews with local journalists and carefully staged sit-downs with Oprah and Regis. So far, the strategy is working beautifully. The press may be grumbling, but the articles and broadcasts are finally communicating the basic message Team Bush wants.

FOR MUCH OF this year, conventional wisdom held that playing ball with the press always paid off. McCain mania, after all, was driven by the senator's Chatty Cathy way with the media. Reporters doted on the Arizona senator—or so whined the other campaigns—and were loath to do anything that might jeopardize their access to the stream of colorful anecdotes and politically incorrect humor that flowed like cheap wine aboard the Straight Talk Express. Overwhelmed by McCain's 24/7 accessibility, we ignored the inconsistencies in his politics and the gaps in his agenda. Outraged—and thoroughly impressed—the post-primary Bush campaign took a modified page from McCain's playbook and started opening up their man to the press. Bush didn't replicate McCain's "all on the record, all the time" approach, but the contrast between Bush's accessibility and Gore's boy-in-the-bubble routine was sufficient. Soon, W. was enjoying kinder, gentler coverage, and the vice president was under fire for being arrogant and remote.

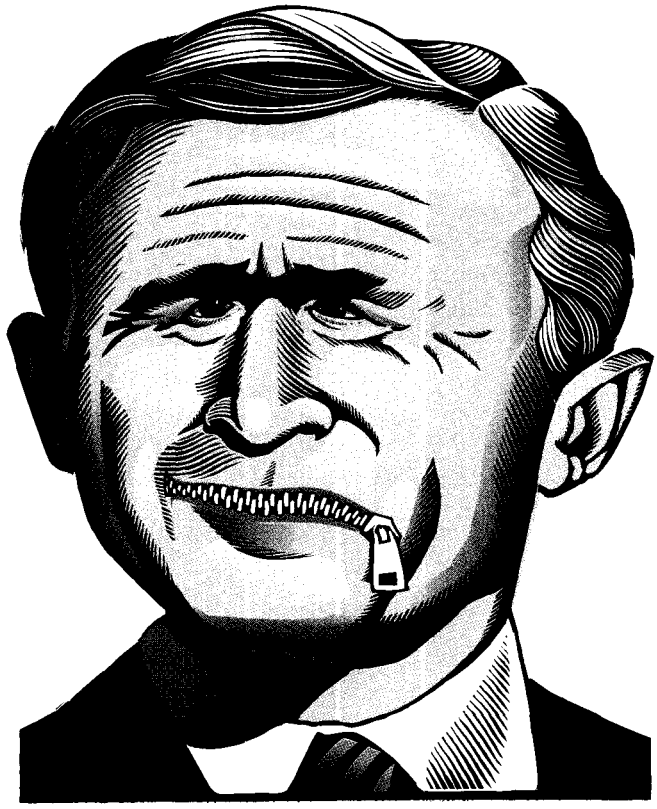
But W. is no John McCain. Even (momentarily) putting aside the governor's (considerable) verbal dysfunction, reporters allow an underdog like McCain leeway they don't grant a front-runner like Bush. And the senator's Vietnam heroism made guilty boomer journalists more reluctant to take him down. Most of all, it was during the primaries. Had the motormouth senator made it to the finals, his honeymoon with the media would likely have ended, with bad feelings on both sides.

Whether because of Bush's big-dog status or his ongoing struggle to speak intelligibably, he soon discovered the downside to hanging with the press. As Gore rode his post-convention bounce, the media started eyeballing Bush for signs of anxiety. No need to look far. Episodes such as Bush's admission—delivered during a casual powwow aboard the campaign plane—that he wasn't effectively selling his tax plan provided ammo for a lengthy round of Bush-knocked-off-his-game stories. So did his garbled response to the "rats" controversy. Forget Medicare, Social Security, education, or even tax cuts—W. was spending all his time fielding snarky media inquiries about his alleged dyslexia and whether "asshole" is appropriate language for a serious presidential candidate.

When the pile of bad press grew high enough and the poll numbers dipped low enough, the lockdown began. Soon the national media found itself out in the cold. Chats on the campaign plane are now off the record, and tarmac media avails are a fading memory. "We haven't talked to him in two weeks," grumbles a member of the traveling press at the Orlando rally. These days, the reporter adds, W. makes time only for the local media: "He's gone totally local—totally native!"

For its part, the Bush campaign makes no apologies. "The press has brought this on itself," says one aide. "The press is so process-driven. They ignite like a spark on dry grass on things that matter so little to voters." As a result, the media has created "an environment where no sane politician of either party will expose themselves to the press. It's not healthy for democracy," the aide admits, but adds that "the pack-mob mentality and degree of triviality that the press corps brings to the trail is not helpful for democracy [either]."

Even the Gore campaign—while sticking to the absurd party line that the vice president is media-accessible—admits that it's easier to stay on message when reporters aren't firing off questions about the latest blooper, blunder, or quasi-scandal. And, with Gore happily ensconced in his protective bubble, his campaign is unlikely to make much of a fuss about Bush's new shyness with the press. This late in the game, with



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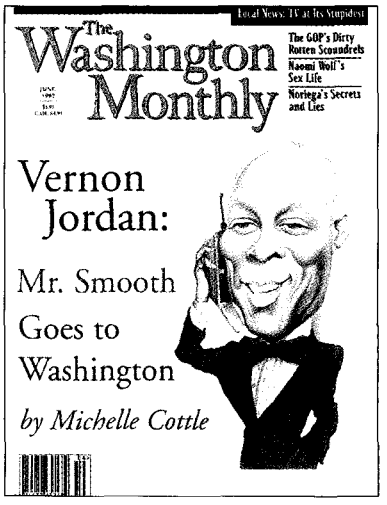

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the race suffocatingly close, both campaigns are willing to risk alienating the national media for a little extra control over their messages. What's more, with the debates coming up, the candidates will have a chance to speak directly to the voting public. Whoever wins the debates will most likely go totally underground (why take chances?), while the losing camp assumes a bunker mentality, blaming and distrusting the press more than ever.

All of which raises the intriguing possibility of a dead-heat presidential race in which *neither* combatant speaks to the national media. The traveling press could bid an early farewell to the trail, go home, shower, pay bills, repair shattered personal lives, and watch the rest of the race on C-SPAN. Gaps in the campaigns' messages could be filled in with paid advertising and guest spots on "Conan O'Brien." Voters could get to know the candidates without that nasty "media filter" you so often hear about. And I could spend the next several weeks on my sofa, eating Haägen Dazs and reading back issues of *Martha Stewart Living*. There may be a flaw in this plan somewhere, but I don't see it. ■

George W., campaign snatcher.

Me Too

By JONATHAN CHAIT

IT WAS EARLY SEPTEMBER, and the dark night of the Republican soul. Over the previous three weeks, Al Gore had quelled the public's doubts about his leadership, established a lead in the polls, and refocused the campaign around issues on which he held an overwhelming edge. Panicked conservatives insisted that George W. Bush's only chance was to run as an unabashed conservative, drawing sharp policy contrasts between himself and the vice president. *The Weekly Standard*'s William Kristol complained that "Bush's muting of his conservatism has a hidden cost: It has made it impossible for him to tag Al Gore with liberalism."

The Bush team retreated to Austin to retool. And, when it emerged, it seemed to have taken the advice to heart. Bush's new slogan was "Real Plans for Real People"—a sign, his advisers explained, that the Texas governor would de-emphasize character in favor of pointed distinctions on policy. "I would rather fight the fight on issues and on philosophy," the candidate declared. The media took this announcement at face value, announcing Bush's efforts "to sharpen the contrasts between his policies and those of the vice president" (*USA Today*) and "shift away from character attacks against Al Gore" (*Newsweek*).

Yet there was something oddly familiar about this new Bush. Where Gore kissed his wife at the Democratic convention, Bush kissed Oprah Winfrey. Where Gore had published an economic platform called "Prosperity for America's Families," Bush put out a "Blueprint for the Middle Class." Where Gore promised to "fight for the middle class," the Bush campaign vowed to "fight for middle-income Americans." The Austin brain trust had studied what the electorate wanted, and the answer it came up with was: Al Gore.

It's something of a pattern. In the primaries, and now in the general election, the Bush campaign has developed a standard response to an opponent's success. First, copy him. Second, denounce him as a fraud for stealing your themes. The Texas governor has become a kind of political doppelgänger—the German mythological creature that mimics its victim and, having assumed its identity, kills it.

BUSH'S FIRST USE of the doppelgänger tactic came in February, after John McCain defeated him in the New Hampshire primary. McCain had captivated the electorate with his calls for reform, his town-hall meetings, and his "Straight Talk Express" bus tour. At first Bush derided McCain's policies and style, claiming the Arizona senator's campaign finance proposals would hurt the GOP, designating his bus the "Double-Talk Express," and sticking to more formal, scripted campaign events. But after McCain's New Hampshire upset, Bush adopted the very campaign trappings he had previously ridiculed, abruptly christening himself a "reformer with results," holding town-hall meetings, and launching his own campaign bus, dubbed the "Victory Express." ("'Straight Talk Two' might have been a little too obvious," groused a McCain spokesman.) Bush even unveiled his own campaign finance reform plan—albeit one designed to tilt the rules further toward business interests. (A characteristic of Bush's mimicry is that he assumes his opponents' rhetoric while making no concessions whatsoever to their substance.) "The central premise of what they did, I think, is undeniable: We have been beaten by McCain, therefore imi-

STEVEN SAVAGE

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tate McCain," observed McCain strategist Mike Murphy at the time.

And just as Bush turned himself into McCain, he turned McCain into him. The Texas governor, the overwhelming favorite of the Republican establishment, attacked his maverick opponent as a tool of entrenched Washington power. The consistent champion of big business accused his pork-busting adversary of "passing the plate to lobbyists and special interests." (One advertisement, which Bush yanked as too ham-handed, even depicted McCain with fat-cat lobbyists in a smoke-filled room.) The man who used family connections to keep himself out of the Vietnam War shared a stage with a supporter who charged that the Navy hero who spent five and a half years in a Hanoi prison didn't care about veterans. And, in the cruelest reversal of all, when McCain finally responded to the barrage of negative, disingenuous assaults with the complaint that Bush "twists the truth like Bill Clinton," Bush denounced him for mudslinging. "It's sad, isn't it?" said an obviously pained Bush. "The true nature of John McCain evidently is coming out."

In the end, the doppelgänger triumphed. Not only did he take South Carolina, regaining the momentum that would win him the nomination, but a majority of the state's voters told pollsters they believed McCain had run the nastier campaign, and 63 percent of Republicans called Bush "the real reformer."

SOON AFTER THE Democratic convention, Bush found himself in roughly the same situation he had been in following New Hampshire. After trailing for months, Gore had taken the lead by presenting himself as the candidate with specific proposals to advance the economic interests of the middle class. Enter the doppelgänger. Bush, who (as his advisers happily admitted) had until that point been running on personality, quickly remade himself as a policy maven fighting valiantly for the beleaguered middle class. On the heels of Gore's economic manifesto, "Prosperity for America's Families," Bush released his own "Blueprint for the Middle Class." "I love talking about the issues on the campaign," he declared, "because we stand with the majority of the people when we talk about the issues." In his new stump speech, titled "Issues Win," Bush casts himself as the policy wonk and Gore as the candidate of personal attacks. "Now, my opponent, after months of bitter attack politics, says he wants to talk about policy," announced Bush, who just a couple of weeks before had sanctioned ads denouncing Gore for his visit to a Buddhist temple in 1996. "He says he wants to talk about issues. And I'm glad he wants to play on our turf." It's as if Gore were the one who spent the summer insisting his opponent would "say anything to get elected," while Bush wanted nothing more than to turn the election into a seminar on the Medicare trust fund.

There are still, to be sure, some differences between the candidates' rhetoric. Bush, for example, has begun attacking Gore for favoring "big government." But, at the same time, he has aggressively stolen his opponent's catchphrases—"fight" and "middle class"—and the themes that underlie them. Rather than boast that his tax cut is larger, as he has in the past, Bush now says it's better for the middle class—parading before the cameras a series of middle-income families who would receive more money from his tax cut than from Gore's. In fact, the two plans are similar in their treatment of the middle class. The main difference lies in how they benefit the wealthy—a difference Bush now scrupulously avoids mentioning.

Or consider prescription-drug coverage, Gore's signature issue. Bush never showed much interest in the topic until his recent free fall, when polls suggested Gore was killing him on it. So rapidly did Bush embrace the issue that he launched the advertisements touting his prescription-drug plan a full week before he unveiled the plan itself. And, again, offering a competing plan was not sufficient—Bush mimicked Gore's arguments as well. The main differences between the candidates' proposals are that Gore would spend more money to insure more seniors and offer drug coverage through the Medicare program itself, while Bush would spend less and rely more heavily on HMOs for coverage. But that hasn't stopped Bush from accusing Gore of "insufficient coverage." Nor has it kept him from imitating the vice president's broadsides against managed care by claiming, perversely, that Gore would "force seniors into a government-run HMO."

And so it continued this week. When Gore charged that Bush had endorsed a 1995 congressional Republican plan to cut Medicare, the Bush campaign immediately responded that it is Gore who wants to cut Medicare, based on decreases in hospital reimbursements in the White House's 2001 budget. Dick Cheney, under fire for his record at Halliburton, began slamming Gore for his ties to big oil. How long before the Bush campaign begins calling Gore an inexperienced lightweight who garbles his syntax? It's a debating tactic recognized by generations of schoolchildren as the "I know you are, but what am I?" defense. It has no known rebuttal. Looks like Bush might win the debates, after all. ■

Race for the Senate: Pennsylvania

Tale of Two Cities

By BENJAMIN SOSKIS

LOWER MERION, PENNSYLVANIA

IT HAD ALL the makings of a successful press conference. There was the engaging Senate candidate, Representative Ron Klink. There was the prominent national Democrat, Senator Russ Feingold, on hand to offer support. There were endorsements from a number of local politicians, including one who had lost to Klink in the primary. In fact, the media event held last week at the Lower Merion Democratic Headquarters, a boxy storefront in the Philadelphia suburbs, was missing only one thing: the media. Although Klink's challenge to Republican Senator Rick Santorum is supposedly one of the most important races in the country—pitting an "electable" Democrat against a vulnerable incumbent in a crucial swing

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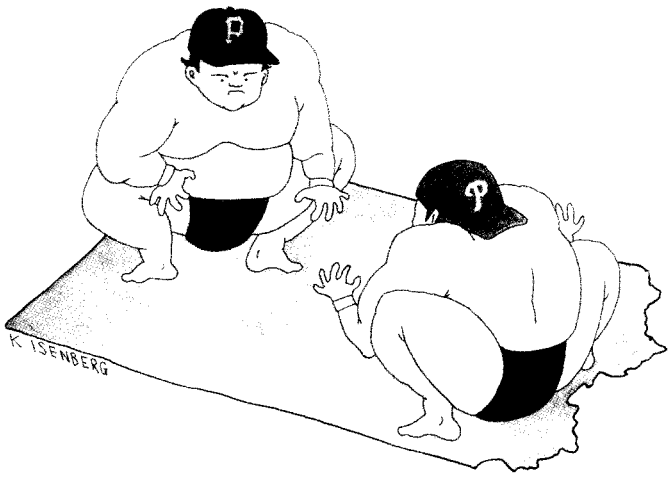

KATIE ISENBERG

state—I was the only reporter who showed up.

You could blame the poor turnout on the fact that the event coincided with a (rare) Philadelphia Eagles victory. Or on a local press corps spoiled by nearly weekly visits from doting presidential candidates. But there's another reason: The Philadelphia press barely knows, or cares, who Klink is. And that's because he comes from near Pittsburgh—which, politically, means he might as well come from Guam.

Few states boast as profound a geographic and ideological gulf as Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh, together with most of the western part of the state, was settled by white ethnic immigrants attracted by its once-thriving steel industry. Western Pennsylvania's predominantly Catholic population and unionized heritage make it, generally, socially conservative and economically liberal. Philadelphia and its southeastern environs, by contrast, take their cues from a WASP (and now partly Jewish) elite that tends to be socially liberal and economically conservative.

In recent years, this combination has proved disastrous for Pennsylvania Democrats. When the party nominates eastern social liberals, they get creamed in steel country. But when it nominates western cultural conservatives, they come east and encounter what Klink found in Lower Merion: indifference or alienation—even, at times, within their own party. Which is a big problem, because while Greater Pittsburgh is home to plenty of voters, it's Greater Philadelphia that has the one ingredient Klink's campaign desperately needs: money.

Although there are almost 500,000 more registered Democrats than Republicans in Pennsylvania, Dems hold only one of five statewide offices (the son of the former Democratic governor, Robert Casey, is auditor general). Democrats are in the minority in the state Senate (the House is evenly split) and haven't elected a U.S. senator to a full term in 38 years. In fact, three years ago the party could not even muster a quorum for its state convention. "The Democratic Party in Pennsylvania has never been weaker," says Pittsburgh political analyst Jon Delano.

In the 1950s and '60s, Pennsylvania's regional divide didn't hit Democrats as hard, because the party had so many other advantages. The state's labor vote was much bigger and more reliably Democratic. And Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, while varying in their political styles, were large Democratic bastions. But in recent decades the percentage of Pennsylvanians that belong to unions has declined—from about 40 percent in the 1950s to 17 percent this year. And so has the percentage that live in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh, which together constituted one-third of the state's electorate in 1964 but only one-fifth today. Like their counterparts elsewhere, Pennsylvania's growing suburban population has less loyalty to the Democratic Party, and so its regional differences have come to the fore—particularly the west's greater cultural conservatism. As a result, a pattern has taken hold in recent years: Eastern Democrats nominate a socially liberal candidate for statewide office; western Democrats defect to the Republican and hand him the election. In Pennsylvania's 1994 Senate race, Democrat Harris Wofford carried metropolitan Philadelphia but lost the rest of the state by 14 points and the election by two. Four years later, the Democratic candidates for Senate and governor both won Philadelphia and lost nearly every other county in the state.

But, as recently as a few months ago, Pennsylvania's Democrats felt confident that this year they could break the east-west curse. While most of the state's successful Republicans have been moderates—think Arlen Specter, Tom Ridge, and the late John Heinz—Santorum is a conservative firebrand elected in the 1994 Gingrich landslide. His reputation for hotheadedness and his perceived hostility to labor, analysts suggested, made him vulnerable. "When he annoys people," says Tom Foley, a former state labor secretary who ran against Klink in the Democratic primary, "he doesn't just annoy them, he annoys their whole family."

Moreover, Klink isn't an eastern social liberal. Since he opposes both abortion and gun control, Democrats figured he could win Pennsylvania's culturally conservative northeastern and southwestern coal and steel country. What's more, his 14-year tenure as a weatherman and reporter at a Pittsburgh-area TV station would give him a hometown edge.

Klink demonstrated his astute understanding of the Keystone State's peculiar divisions in the primary, when he masterfully used the east-west split to his advantage. While five other Democrats, with electoral bases clustered in the east, jousted for the Philadelphia vote, Klink concentrated on his own backyard. Crucially, this strategy meant that his cash-strapped campaign—Klink took out a second mortgage on his home to prop up his sagging coffers—didn't need to spend a single cent in the costly Philadelphia media market. Decorously removed from the fray, Klink let his opponents hammer away at his socially conservative views. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, a former congresswoman who later dropped out of the primary, tagged Klink "Santorum Lite"; Allyson Schwartz, a state senator who for 13 years headed up a Philadelphia women's health clinic, lambasted Klink for thinking that "his conscience is more important than the conscience of American women." But Klink was not vying for the voters to whom these warnings were directed. Though he received only 10 percent of the vote in Philadelphia, he carried the west overwhelmingly and won the primary by 15 points. "I knew what I was doing," Klink boasts. "There's a certain way you run a campaign."

The national party was impressed. Just days after Klink's

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victory, Robert Torricelli, chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, announced, "This becomes one of the big five [Senate races] for us.... I think the people of Pennsylvania are assured of one of the most competitive and closest United States Senate campaigns in the country." The DSCC's political director, Jim Jordan, agreed. "The race will be very close. Klink will cut quite sharply into Santorum's base, both geographically and ideologically."

Klink looked well-positioned to shake off the curse. Except for one thing: If the west contains many of the votes, the east has most of the cash. As Philadelphia Democratic consultant Larry Ceisler remarks, "The Allyson Schwartz-type liberals are the ones who give the money." In fact, the same qualities that led Klink to victory in the primary—his high profile in the west and his social conservatism—became liabilities once it was over. Wealthy eastern donors who had bankrolled previous Democratic Senate campaigns cringed at the thought of writing checks to a candidate who voted against the Brady Bill, co-sponsored a repeal of the assault-rifle ban, and opposes abortion. Even Klink admitted to reporters that "the electoral profile of Ron Klink is someone who can win. The electoral profile of someone who can raise money in Philadelphia is somebody else."

In June, Klink fired his chief fund-raiser, and when the campaign's accounts were made public at the end of the month, it became clear why: He had raised $565,000 to Santorum's $4.43 million. In desperation, Klink leased an apartment in South Philadelphia and began spending 80 percent of his time in the eastern part of the state. Even so, in July, according to one poll, 70 percent of Pennsylvanians still hadn't heard of him. Says G. Terry Madonna, a pollster from Millersville University: "This race is about Santorum, who is the incumbent, and Klink has not made a case that Santorum is unworthy of reelection, because he hasn't had the money."

That task grew even more difficult in the spring and summer as Santorum dashed toward the center, describing himself on the stump as a "compassionate conservative" and touting his working relationships with Democrats like Joe Lieberman and former Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell. By midsummer, convinced that the DSCC's money would be better spent on more competitive races, Torricelli removed Pennsylvania from its list of top priorities.

Then came the Democratic convention and Gore's dramatic Pennsylvania bounce; Democratic officials began wondering whether the state might be in play downballot after all. The party arranged for a troop of high-profile national figures to publicly support Klink, including Senators Barbara Boxer, Ted Kennedy, and Tom Daschle. Clinton and Gore praised the congressman in speeches. James Carville, at a Harrisburg fund-raiser in September, fired up the crowd by labeling any Democrat who did not support Klink a "traitor." And, when self-financed candidates won Democratic Senate primaries in Washington and Minnesota, the DSCC began to shovel cash back into the Pennsylvania race. Last week, buoyed by polls that showed Klink gaining ground, the national Democratic party shelled out nearly $1 million to fund his first TV ads, touting his record on Medicare and prescription drugs.

According to Millersville's Madonna, Klink probably now trails Santorum by around ten points. And, with his modest rise, the congressman's partisans have once again begun calling him Santorum's ideal foe. They point to polls showing that in the west, the only area where both candidates are well-known, Klink is in the lead. But that's exactly the problem. Few doubt that Klink is ideally positioned to defeat Santorum on the issues. But those same stands make him poorly suited to raise the money he needs to get out his message. He may be the perfect candidate, but that doesn't mean he can win. ■

Is Gore to blame for the oil crisis?

Political Mileage

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

AL GORE LAST WEEK said America faces a national "energy crisis," and he blamed OPEC and big oil. He may be right, but here are some additional culprits: Gore and the administration he serves. The main reason petroleum prices are high is that American cars and trucks—which account for two-thirds of U.S. oil demand—keep using more gasoline. And, in a little-noticed move in 1993, President Clinton and Gore created a project that essentially guaranteed vehicle fuel efficiency would not improve during their time in office. If the Clintonites are compiling a list of villains on whom to blame the energy "crisis" that imperils Gore's presidential run, they should put themselves near the top.

Seven years ago, at a White House ceremony with the heads of the Big Three automakers, Clinton and Gore announced the awkwardly named "Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles" (PNGV). Chrysler (now DaimlerChrysler), Ford, and General Motors would receive antitrust exemptions to conduct joint research on fuel efficiency. The federal government would fund most of the work, with the goal being a full-sized car capable of getting a spectacular 80 miles per gallon. Gore compared the project to the Apollo moon program, saying American know-how would save the day.

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Seven years later, the PNGV has spent $1.6 billion of the government's money and produced nothing. Not only has it not fielded a breakthrough vehicle, it hasn't even spawned a fuel-saving idea to incorporate into existing cars. The Big Three now say the PNGV won't have something on the road until 2004—if ever.

The main thing the supercar initiative has produced is pretexts for avoiding the tough political choices that would really increase fuel efficiency. "The reason the project exists is to create headlines and spend large amounts of government money, not to accomplish much that is useful," says Tom Gage, a former Chrysler executive. "It serves as an excuse for not making hard choices on energy policy." Since the project's founding, the mpg rate of vehicles sold in the United States has steadily declined. Meanwhile, two Japanese automakers, Honda and Toyota, have put into production the first advanced-efficiency vehicles—"hybrid" propulsion cars that employ a combination of piston and electric motors to achieve big jumps in fuel economy, but operate exactly like existing cars. Honda and Toyota did it without government subsidies or special legal exemptions, and, by getting to hybrid propulsion first, they may have positioned themselves for a market-share grab that could echo the Japanese auto expansion of the 1970s.

That individual Japanese companies beat an entire U.S. government "moon program" ought to shame the White House. It hasn't. Clinton has proposed increasing the partnership's funding. Gore, for his part, recently held a campaign event at which Big Three executives again stood by his side as he announced that the supercar research program would be expanded to cover light trucks. And, of course, he bashed OPEC and big oil.

AS JAMES JOHNSTON, a former General Motors lobbyist, laid out in his 1997 book, *Driving America*, the Clinton administration conceived the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles to avoid a bruising legislative fight over the fuel-economy standard known as CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy). Enacted following the 1973 oil shock, the standard required annual improvement in the "fleet average" efficiency of cars and light trucks (SUVs and minivans count as the latter). CAFE rules helped compel automakers to improve the overall mileage of new vehicles from 16 mpg in 1975 to 25 mpg in 1988. That not only saved drivers money, it moderated U.S. oil demand, which weakened OPEC and contributed to low gas prices from the mid-'80s through the late '90s.

But the Big Three hated CAFE, and during the Bush administration they convinced Congress to suspend it. Beginning in 1989, the fleet requirement was fixed at 27.5 mpg for cars and 20.7 mpg for light trucks—where it remains today.

The automakers weren't entirely wrong. Johnston (now with the American Enterprise Institute), economist Robert Crandall of the Brookings Institution, and other analysts have persuasively argued that CAFE is an inefficient way to pursue efficiency. Because of wording quirks, it sometimes rewards automakers for moving production out of the country or actually encourages them to make vehicles into gas guzzlers. (Bigger vehicles are rewarded by being bumped up into the light-truck category, whose efficiency requirements are lower; absurdly, automakers originally began thinking about SUVs in part to evade CAFE.)

The problem is that the efficient way to increase efficiency—endorsed by numerous economists, from Kenneth Arrow on the left to Martin Feldstein on the right—is through higher energy taxes. Raise pump prices (while cutting other taxes so the outcome is "revenue neutral") and the market would sort out the details more efficiently than any government program ever could. Manufacturers would have a profit incentive to improve mpg rates, while buyers could decide for themselves whether they wanted to save at the pump or bear the cost of guzzler-style transportation. But significantly raising gas taxes is a big political loser, which is why no prominent national politician since John Anderson has proposed it.

When the Clintonites took office, they faced pressure from Democrats in Congress to raise CAFE standards—and equally fierce pressure from the automakers and the United Auto Workers to leave them alone. Nevada Senator Richard Bryan assembled a bloc of votes for a phased increase to 40 mpg, combined with the removal of the loopholes causing CAFE's unintended consequences. Bryan's bill wasn't perfect, but at least it tried to reduce America's demand for petroleum. Had it passed, SUV mania would not have swept the auto market, increasing traffic congestion, sprawl, and road danger. U.S. oil consumption would not have risen to 19 million barrels a day, and today there would likely be no oil "crisis."

But, rather than pick a tough fight, the Clinton administration looked for a painless third way, which it found it in the supercar project. Politically, the project has served its purpose well. Since 1993, every congressional push for higher mpg standards has been defeated—not only because of fierce Republican opposition but because the White House has tacitly aided that opposition by suggesting that the supercar project means new standards are unnecessary.

YET THE PROJECT has been cursed from its inception. For one thing, its 80-mpg goal is an impossible one. The number appealed to Clinton and Gore because it let them claim they would triple gas mileage. But no one in the engineering field believed then—or believes today—that a full-size 80-mpg vehicle is possible at an affordable price. The National Research Council, an arm of the National Academy of Sciences, recently said that while 80 mpg may be "technically feasible ... the cost requirement is clearly unattainable" for mass production. The reason is that 80-mpg cars would require space-program technology: materials allowing valve chambers to withstand temperatures of up to 2,600 degrees, exotic lightweight structural components, low-friction tires, and even the replacement of side-view mirrors with miniature TV cameras to reduce aerodynamic drag. Such features may exist one day, but today they are blue-sky—and this was well-known when the project began.

The implementation was almost as bad as the concept. Most of the funding—which averaged $250 million annually—was channeled through the Department of Energy, not

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exactly the Einstein of government agencies. And, sure enough, the supercar project became a bureaucratic swamp: Money was processed mainly through the DOE (which gave some to the automakers and some to national laboratories such as Los Alamos, which have no experience in commercial auto engineering), but also through the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Transportation, the National Science Foundation—you name it. The labyrinthine structure meant no one was in charge and no one was accountable: There were "neither carrots nor sticks," as Daniel Spurling, director of the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California at Davis, noted at a congressional hearing. In the business world, nothing gets done unless someone will be penalized if a project fails and rewarded if it succeeds. The supercar consortium did neither.

The program's information-sharing provision also gave automakers a disincentive to invent anything under the PNGV aegis, since it would just go to their rivals. (Since Chrysler merged with Daimler-Benz, Ford and General Motors have worried that any useful supercar technology would end up in the hands of not only competitors in Detroit but those overseas as well.) So, to avoid giving away ideas, the Big Three have kept the good stuff—such as the details of "fuel cells," a promising form of propulsion that uses methane or pure hydrogen to make horsepower with minimal greenhouse emissions—close to the vest. The supercar consortium, by contrast, tends to work on technologies—such as diesel engines, which the PNGV insists on calling "direct-combustion devices" to make them sound like something else—that car companies figure will never be worth the investment anyway. (In another disturbing sign of bureaucratic detachment from reality, PNGV officials say "energy-conversion device" when they mean "engine.")

Not only does the requirement to share information offer no incentive to come up with marketable breakthroughs, it actually does the reverse. The supercar consortium appears to allow the Big Three—which normally would be prohibited by antitrust rules from cooperative planning—to signal to one another what they will and will not build. Acting in isolation, DaimlerChrysler, Ford, and General Motors, each worried that one of the others would jump into the market with a 30-mpg SUV, might improve their own gas mileage as a preemptive strike. Through the PNGV, however, the Big Three can assure one another that none of them will strike first with improved mileage. The motive is not conspiracy but short-term profit: The high-mileage full-sized vehicles Detroit is certain someday to build will make money, but why sink billions into tooling up to make advanced vehicles now if that capital cost can be indefinitely postponed?

NOT SURPRISINGLY, THEN, the PNGV has distinguished itself mainly in holding conferences and awarding medals to its officials. Supercar researchers wasted several years investigating advanced forms of diesels, though analysts warned that the diesel engine, which is inherently sooty, had little chance of meeting future smog-control rules. The PNGV was slow to focus on hybrid propulsion, though anyone who read the automotive press knew Honda and Toyota had already figured out this would be the first practical advanced-propulsion idea.

With its focus on the improbables, the supercar project became a reason for not putting into use the fuel-efficiency steps that are practical right now—mainly weight and horsepower reduction. By far the most significant factor in mpg is the mass being moved. Between 1975 and 1988, the average weight of new cars and trucks declined by 800 pounds. This was caused not by a shift to dangerous minicars, which have never represented more than a tiny fraction of the U.S. market, but by trimming excess off full-sized cars and trucks. The result was that during this period the fuel efficiency of U.S. vehicles steadily improved. But beginning around 1990—when CAFE increases were suspended—the typical weight of U.S. vehicles began to rise. Today, with the SUV glut, average new-car weight is almost back to what it was in 1975, when enormous Ford Galaxies and Chevrolet Impalas clogged American driveways.

To move this ever-increasing weight, engineers have focused on improving power, with the result that today's typical new car boasts 180 horsepower, versus 140 in 1975. In a sense, the internal-combustion engine has grown steadily more efficient; the problem is that the progress has gone toward making vehicles bigger and faster rather than easier on gas. Give up a little weight and horsepower, and a 35-mpg full-sized car or minivan is possible right now, many analysts believe, at market prices. Were such cars widespread, today's oil prices would not be as high. But that's not what Detroit wanted to build—and the supercar project provided the perfect excuse.

SPURRED BY OIL-PRICE trends and the breakthroughs in Japan, the Big Three are finally taking real steps to improve gas mileage. DaimlerChrysler expects to have a hybrid-propelled version of its gargantuan Durango SUV on the market in 2003; Ford plans a hybrid SUV the same year, and General Motors is preparing a hybrid-powered pickup truck. These hybrid heavy vehicles should deliver up to a 25 percent improvement in fuel economy. That may not be flashy—a 25 percent improvement in the Durango will only boost it from 12 mpg to 15 mpg in city driving—but the results will be substantial. A 25 percent more efficient SUV, in a typical year, would burn 175 fewer gallons of gas and emit more than a ton less greenhouse gas. American automakers are even working seriously on fuel cells, which have the potential to set us free from OPEC forever.

Automakers are turning their focus toward mpg because of market pressure, but they would probably be further along had each member of the Big Three worked alone to produce a practical advanced-mileage car rather than all of them working together under a top-heavy federal program. You'd think New Democrats like Clinton and Gore would have realized that while government can shape the market via taxes or standards, getting federal agencies involved in commercial product development is a formula for waste and delay. But they didn't, which is why Gore should not now point fingers at others for an oil "crisis" his administration helped create. ■

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Yehuda Amichai, 1924–2000

YEHUDA AMICHAI was a great Israeli poet, a great Jewish poet, a great poet. His subject was the possibility of happiness, the legitimacy of happiness, the snatching of happiness, in a universe that conspires to stifle it, and to enlist us in its conspiracy. To mark his death in Jerusalem on September 22, I have translated five poems about mortality, from a volume of verse that Amichai published in 1985.

Last spring, we traveled deep and high into the Judean Desert with the writer Meir Shalev, who brought us to a brutal, quickening place above the Dead Sea, across from the mountains of Moab. Amichai was very ill and, except in his appetite for the world, very frail. On our way up the canyons we chatted about many things, including a popular Israeli poet of the 1920s known as Rachel. I recalled the lines that appear on her gravestone on the shore of the Sea of Galilee: "Look across, where no one comes, and spread your hands / Every man has his Nebo upon a vast land." Nebo was the peak in Moab where Moses gazed upon the promised land, and thereby upon the limits of his own life. In the late afternoon I took this photograph of Amichai looking across, gazing at Nebo. If he was regarding the limits of his own life, it was from the promised land.

He was the most primary person I have ever known.

—Leon Wieseltier

The Body Is the Reason for Love

The body is the reason for love.
Later it is the fortress of love.
Later it is the prison-house of love.
But when the body dies, love leaves it
in freedom and in a great abundance,
like a broken slot machine
that all at once, and with a thunderous ring,
pours forth all the coins
of all the generations of luck.

Man Thou Art and Unto Man Thou Shalt Return

Death in war begins
with the descent of the stairs
by a single man, a young man.

Death in war begins
with the closing of a door in silence.
Death in war begins
with the opening of a window to have a look.

So do not weep for him who has gone off,
weep for him who descends the stairs of his house,
weep for him who pockets his key in his last pocket.
Weep for the photograph that remembers in our place,
weep for the paper that remembers,
weep for the tears that do not remember.

Who, in this spring, will arise
and say to the dust:
man thou art and unto man thou shalt return?

As In Funerals

Behind every deed that I do
they march, as in funerals,
the child who I was many years ago
and the young man in his first love who once I was
and the soldier who I was in the old days
and the man with gray hair who I was an hour ago.
And also others, strangers too, who I was
and whom I have forgotten.
One of them might even have been a woman.

And all their lips are moving and reminiscing
and all their eyes are moist and gleaming
and all utter words of lamentation and consolation
and all will return
to their affairs and their appointments,
as in funerals.

And one said to another: "The main objective
of industry in our time is to create

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the strongest materials that are also light."
That is what he said, and he wept and went on his way,
as in funerals.

Waking From Sleep Toward Evening

"Thou shalt not covet," a bird chirps.
"Thou shalt not make unto thee," another bird cries.
The skies above Petah Tikvah are red
like the inside of a man's body.
And I, who will certainly die in one of the years to come,
wake from an afternoon nap to eternal life
until nightfall.

The mixture of my father and my mother
breaks down within me into separate parts.
I am as content as an empty cage without a bird.
I am as melancholy as an empty cage without a bird.

My only flags are my clothes,
my anthem is my breath,
and the first word and the last is:
"Here."

People's Bodies

People's bodies are different from each other
but their souls are similar and full of splendid advantages,
like airports.
So do not give me your soul, give me your body
which I can never finally know.
Do not give me what the jar holds, give me the jar.

Stand with me, therefore, at airports
where they dress the pain of parting in lovely words,
like orphans,
where food and drink are expensive
and people and their fates are cheaper.

A man is speaking into a telephone
and from the receiver he drinks agony and love.

Those who weep, too, have hands
as white as brides,
and what will arms without embraces
do in the world?

Let my soul die with my body.

Yehuda and Chana Amichai, the Judean Desert, May 1, 2000

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Cultures, Blended and Otherwise

WELCOME, Nisha Ganatra. Last week saw the debut of Benito Zambrano, the Spanish writer-director of *Solas*, a dignified domestic drama. This week our luck holds out. Ganatra arrives, as co-author, director, and leading actress of her first feature film, a comedy about a very different kind of domesticity. **Chutney Popcorn** (Mata) centers on a young Indian-American woman in New York, her lesbianism and lesbian friends, her family and family problems, and, surprisingly, Ganatra makes a delightful scherzo of it, with (as is so often true of good comedy) some sweet moments of pang.

The title is a problem. As a phrase, it is unattractive. Worse, it needs a moment of analysis, as against the immediacy with which good titles work. Even worse, it doesn't truly represent the film. This is not a story about the mix of Indian and American cultures, it is about a lesbian having a baby.

But once past the title, the film bubbles and nudges and entices. Ganatra, whose co-author was Susan Carnival, looks with understanding and with endearing amusement at Reena, a photographer in her late twenties, who lives happily in Greenwich Village with the blonde Lisa. Out on Long Island (in Queens, I think), in an Indian community, live Reena's older sister Sarita and her non-Indian husband, Mitch. Two mixed couples. Near Sarita and Mitch lives the sisters' mother, Meenu, who is lovingly accepting of Reena's lesbianism, as is Lisa's mother with her daughter.

Sarita and Mitch are trying to have a baby, and at last Sarita is told by a physician that she is incapable of child-bearing. Mitch is not sterile; so Reena, out of love for her sister and Mitch, offers to be a surrogate mother. (The fertilization would be indirect.) By the time pregnancy occurs, Sarita has changed her mind, and so has Reena's companion, Lisa. But, so to speak, the die is cast. Emotional hurricanes sweep in from all directions as the pregnancy moves on.

The film's chief triumph is its tone: this story is couched neither in the lachrymose nor the farcical but in the truth of intelligent, affectionate people. This is what makes it both nicely sentimental and always entertaining. The dialogue is bright and the pace keeps the story afloat even in scenes of stress.

Then, with a crowning swirl, there is the acting. Ganatra, one might say, is the most successful in the cast because, as Reena, she promises least and succeeds completely. She is pudgy-faced, with no notable feature except her eyes, and is a bit clumsy, yet before the picture is many minutes along, she wins us—with her several kinds of ease and authenticity. Reena wins affection because, reticently, she is so capable of giving it. Her manifest love—of Lisa, of Sarita, of Meenu—is what creates her character.

Three other women in the cast are exceptional. Jill Hennesy, as Lisa, would be a find except that she has already been found: she has done much film and TV work. But not enough. Tart but tender, she is a performer whose immediate credibility makes acting—realistic acting, anyway—seem as easy as it ought to seem. Her persona has a touch of Barbara Stanwyck, a star whose buried toughness was part of her comedy and sex.

Sakina Jaffrey plays Sarita with the engaging moodiness of a woman struggling to adjust to pleasant-and-otherwise facts. And there is Madhur Jaffrey—there certainly is Madhur Jaffrey—who is Sakina's real-life mother and here her film mother, also of course Reena's. I've been seeing Madhur Jaffrey ever since *Shakespeare Wallah* (1965), in which she played a Bombay film star, and, even when her pictures wobbled, have admired her all along. In *Chutney Popcorn* she does the best work of hers that I remember, and it is comic—a garrulous, warm, unsuccessful ruler of the family who adores her daughters even as she fails to govern them. In the cosmos there is, certainly, a cosmic Mom, and Madhur Jaffrey gives us here the Indian version.

Not incidentally, the off-screen Madhur Jaffrey is also the author of some thirteen books about her country's cuisine, so, not incidentally, Indian food is important in this picture. The director also gets a sort of running gag out of it. Out in the Indian community is a bearded street vendor of Indian food who prepares things to order in his stall. Several of the film's key scenes occur as characters stop to get food. The vendor never says a word in the whole picture: he just listens as he works, and, at the end, when matters brighten, he smiles.

Ganatra opens the film with close-ups of designs being worked on a woman's skin with henna and dyes of various colors—impermanent tattoos. The designs are gorgeous and serve prettily the mixed-culture ambience of the story. This is only the first evidence of Ganatra's eye; throughout, in dramatic terms, she knows exactly where the camera should be at every moment. She clearly had the confidence of her cast and, in return, kept them bouncing along with just the right *brio*, even in the darker moments. The camera work, by Erin King, is unfussy, helpful. The editing, by Jane Pia Abramowitz, has a few moments where we can almost hear a click as sequences change, but that may be because the film was undershot—probably the editor could have used a bit more footage for some bridges. In any case, we're told that this is the first American independent film made and produced by an entirely female principal crew. On the evidence, this is good news.

Anna Deavere Smith is a large-souled, large-minded woman of extraordinary gifts. In recent years she has been particularly noted for the preparation and performance of two theater pieces that examined horrors of the 1990s. The first was *Fires in the Mirror*, about the 1991 clash between Jews and blacks in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn; the second, which has now been filmed, **Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992** (Offline), is about the riots there. Smith, who is black, was the sole cast member of both theater pieces. She interviewed hundreds of people who were connected one way or another with those two catastrophes. She used some of their recorded voices as text for her solo performance in which she portrayed each of the speakers. I saw both of those pieces and was struck by her wizardry as a mimic and by her concern for verity, which in both pieces meant the just representation of the white people involved.

The film of *Twilight*, which is having its premiere at the Film Forum in New York,

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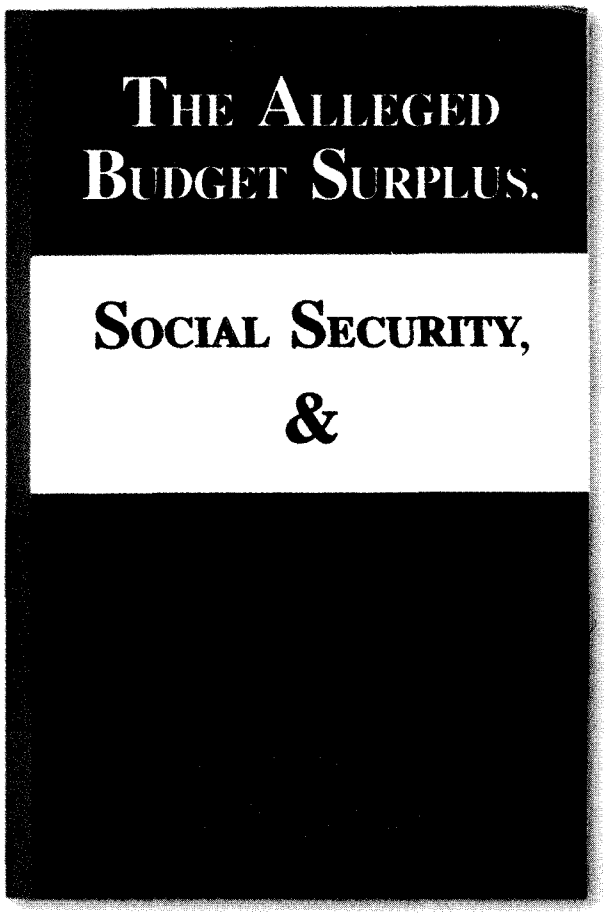
A BOOK FOR OUR TIMES

"The budget-surplus myth may go down in history as the greatest deception ever perpetrated on the American people by political leaders, and historians will probably be at a loss to explain how a government financial status that was sour as a lemon could be sold to so many as one sweeter than honey"—*From the book.*



"...Dr. Smith's book should be required reading for everyone, with the caveat that what you will learn won't make it easier to swallow what you're being fed by the candidates this election season."—*Toledo Blade*

September 30, 2000; 128 pages; Allen W. Smith, Ph.D.; cloth $17.95 (0-9648504-8-6); paper $9.95 (0-9648504-5-1)
Available at bookstores or direct from Ironwood Publications (800) 840-6812

Suggested Debate Questions for Vice President Gore and Governor Bush

1. Isn't it true that the non-Social Security portion of the federal budget ran a deficit in every year from 1961 through 1998?

2. Isn't it true that just since 1981 the government has borrowed more than $4.6 trillion to cover deficits bringing the total federal debt to $5.6 trillion?

3. Isn't it true that the "alleged budget surplus" is almost totally the result of 1983 legislation that raised Social Security taxes in order to build up a surplus in the Social Security fund in preparation for the retirement of the baby-boom generation beginning about 2010?

4. Isn't it true that the government has borrowed every dollar of the Social Security surplus and used it for general government spending?

5. Isn't it true that proposals for paying off the debt by 2012 will not pay off a single dollar of the total federal debt, but will instead borrow Social Security funds to pay off publicly-held debt?

6. Isn't it true that the official projections in the "MID-SESSION REVIEW" submitted to Congress by President Clinton, June 26, 2000, show the total federal debt increasing from $5,657 billion in 2000 to $6,543 billion in 2012?

7. Isn't is true that the "projected" surpluses for the next decade are based on assumptions that the economy will continue to operate almost at full-speed year after year, and that the projections do not allow for the inevitable recession that always follows the expansion phase of the business cycle?

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inevitably decreases our awe of Smith's virtuosity. In the theater she performed all the characters before our eyes in the space of about ninety minutes, one right after another, with (as I recall) minimal costume changes. It was a breathtaking display. In the film, however, only a couple of times does she slip from one to another person; mostly, the characters are seen in different settings and clothes, with TV clips intercut; so we know that hours, possibly days, elapsed between the shooting of one scene and another. This constricts our amazement somewhat. Smith is still a wonder of virtuosity, moving with uncanny accuracy from—among others—a smug Hollywood agent to a black looter, from a Korean woman widowed in the disaster to Charlton Heston, all with relevant, pithy reactions to the riot. But the film lacks the cumulation in Smith's art of the theater piece.

And there's another concern. Being the woman that she is, Smith must have been troubled at times by an iron question: "Are people leaving the theater extended by what I've shown about these awful matters or are they just admiring me, my skill?" No one of her sensibility could have escaped that question. All good art on grave subjects runs something of that risk, but the risk is enlarged with a monologist. Possibly that is why Smith's next project, a work in progress, uses a multiple cast. ■

Mindy Aloff on Dance

Arias

CHRISTOPHER CAINES, a native of Canada, is a graduate of Harvard in comparative literature. As a college student, however, he began to study modern dance with Radcliffe's Claire Mallardi, a former student of Hanya Holm, and his future was sealed. Immediately upon graduation, Caines gave up an academic career for dancing, made a beeline for New York, and never looked back. Today, he is a 37-year-old choreographer at work in the city—one youthful dancemaker among many, scrambling to pay his dancers for the two or three concerts that he produces each year. He has an extensive background of study in classical ballet and modern dance, but most of what he made in the 1990s would be categorized as performance art, including "True Love," a tender and exquisite fantasia on Atlantic Canada and Britain, set during World War II.

Recently Caines seems to have had a change of heart about what he wants to do. This past May, at a small, Ladies' Mile-area studio called The Construction Company, he presented a startling 75-minute suite of dances—real, honest-to-goodness dances—whose choreographic playfulness and musical refinement seem to have just lit in from the dawn of British ballet, as if a path not taken had suddenly opened up with possibilities and promise. The work, called "Arias," was performed by a cast of seven dancers, three singers, and a pianist. The dancemaking is old school, with clear beginnings, middles, and ends; and it is drenched in intuitive musicality and cultivated musicianship.

There is not a moment of therapy in these dances; they are not about "relationships." Of course, how figures relate to one another in terms of choreographic form and dramatic situation is certainly intrinsic to their interest. Although the women, like the men, wore soft oxfords or went barefoot, and only the men—Caines and Brazilian-born Luciano Lazzarotto—performed *enchaînement* drawn from the classical vocabulary, the entire suite operated like a ballet, or like the way ballet used to operate when it was mysterious and charming. Steps were gestures; partnering had protocol and decorum; images were "planted" with apparent off-handedness early on, and then reappeared in the course of the evening in heightened contexts and subject to varying musical impulses.

The ballet steps were drawn from the lexicon of the Cecchetti school, the foundation of British classicism, which Caines first studied in Boston with Marie Paquette, a former Joffrey dancer, and which he now studies several times a week with Caroline Lord, a former student of Vincenzo Celli. The technique of the Italian dancer and pedagogue Enrico Cecchetti—a virtuoso dancer and, by all accounts, a fantastical mime with the Maryinsky Theater and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes—goes back to that of the theoretician Carlo Blasis, with whom Cecchetti's principal teacher, Giovanni Lepri, studied. It may also have been influenced by Marius Petipa, for whom Cecchetti served as a principal dancer and a ballet master from 1887 to 1902. The schooling places emphasis on strength in the back and the feet, especially in poses and in linking and beaten steps, at which Cecchetti himself excelled. In "Arias," the orthogonal lines, the closely cherished attitudes, the small transitions and terre-à-terre footwork could have graced an evening at the Mercury Theatre. Even British choreographers, trained in Cecchetti from childhood, do not use it this way anymore—with reverence for its academic purity. For a balletomane starving in these crossover times, it was a feast.

Arranged in twenty-three sections, "Arias" is a kind of samplebook of imagery whose subject is the various faces of love, and whose pervasive theme is sleeplessness. Its tone and temper, though, are closer to meditation than to high passion. The setting is a party, with people attired in clothing vaguely reminiscent of the 1930s. At several points, the partygoers participate in little entertainments for one another: the statuesque Sally Hess lolls by an imaginary river, overshadowed by several dancing trees (who break into a Charleston), as Lazzarotto, poling an imaginary gondola, tries to get her to join him on the water. Caines, in soft black gloves and a harlequin mask dotted with stars, mesmerizes Rika Burnham, a porcelain doll of a dancer, to marry herself to sleep through a fragile duet of billowing lifts. Ariane Anthony, in a kimono and sumptuously feathered mask, discreetly chases a butterfly in a solo that seems to have been co-choreographed by Ruth St. Denis and the late, lamented wit James Waring. (The witty Waring, who died in 1975, was a choreographer and a teacher of classical ballet known for his highly individual and often fantastical dances of the 1950s and 1960s, which influenced the founders of the Judson Dance Theater.)

Although a number of the sections in "Arias" are duets, only once or twice are their amorous implications physically realized in a moment of embrace. In general, love here is represented in a symbolic way, through gestures that relate to the lyrics of the various songs that make up the score, through the shape and timing of choreographic variations, or, in one section, "Silent Song," through the enactment of an incident about lost chances as a survivor of unrequited love might remember them. Lit by the choreographer himself in a fantastical array of variations on lamplight, the suite is more or less a collection of nocturnes, some for groups, some for couples, the last for an individual about to bed down in the dark night of the soul.

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Along the way, Caines changes his modus operandi from literal playacting to lyric suggestion with the unemphatic, practiced assurance of a commuter crossing a subway platform from the local to the express. His mix of childlike candor and mature craftsmanship sometimes suggested the work of Paul Taylor, David Gordon, and occasionally, in fanciful passages, Remy Charlip or Waring, which the choreographer is too young ever to have seen. Yet the range and the sensitivity of his musical-literary responses—which simultaneously acknowledge musical intervals and verbal accents (in Italian, French, and German, as well as in English)—are not like anyone else's, not even Mark Morris's, which have set a living standard for subtlety in this area.

One comes away uncertain whether Caines has actually had any direct choreographic influences. But speaking with Caines, I learned that he thinks he has: Merce Cunningham, at whose school he studied on scholarship for several years. I said that, if so, it has been one of the most beneficial influences imaginable, useful to the choreographer and invisible to the audience. Caines replied that the influence isn't neat: for some years (the years of his performance art and installations) he was so in awe of Cunningham that he was frozen from making his own dances. Only quite recently has he thawed. Without this information, it would be difficult to detect Cunningham—so closely identified with the uncoupling of dance and music—in a work where dance and music are inextricably intertwined.

Still, on reflection, it is possible to recognize certain characteristics of Cunningham's style: the decorum in partnering; the winsome, occasionally spooky, humor; the look of the dancing body in a balance, testing its equilibrium as if it were a pharmaceutical scale. The way Caines casts himself is rather like Cunningham, too: as something of an outsider who provides dramatic focus at key junctures, a dreamer with his eyes open, cavorting with his dreams.

Caines has so many gifts that are suited to making dances and to theater (he sometimes works as a director)—and, owing to impecunious circumstances, he has had occasion to exercise so many of them—that he couldn't even bring himself to tell the truth about them all in the "Arias" program. "Set, costume, and lighting design by Beatrice Fairfax," it reads: "Beatrice Fairfax," a name in one of Ira Gershwin's lyrics, is a pseudonym for Christopher Caines. (Beatrice also did some of the musical arrangements.)

A trained singer—he performed the first two of the arias, by Scarlatti, in a warm, sure baritone—a student of tabla and frame drum, a composer, and a pianist, Caines lives much of every day making or studying music, and he makes dances directly from musical scores. The score for "Arias" encompasses two hundred years of the art song. In the main, it consists of beloved recital pieces from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century: by Scarlatti, Caldera, Caccini, Parisotti, Schoenberg, Gershwin, Handel, Giordani. Three songs by Fauré (like dollops of palate-clearing *granité* between courses at a banquet) effect a gentle transition from the "Silent Song" to the resonant declarations of austere suffering in the Schoenberg numbers, all with lyrics by Stefan Georg and drawn from the suite "The Book of the Hanging Gardens." Cool and lilting, the Fauré selections serve as unusual choices to represent the nineteenth century, although beautiful choices they are.

COURTESY JULIE LEMBERGER

Christopher Caines and Rika Burnham in "Arias"

At The Construction Company, these songs were performed by the eloquent and accomplished mezzo Alexandra Montano (familiar to the New York music world for her work in early music and with Philip Glass) and by the young soprano Sarah Gibson. Both singers looked and sounded energized; indeed, they had to be on their toes, as Caines arranged for them to participate in the action now and again. And the dancers were radiant. Caines's choreography showcases women with tremendous wisdom and tact, presenting each as an individual and seeking out the particular technical strengths of each.

In the case of a 1920s-ish modern-dance solo for Rachel Cohen, he brought with him into the studio Fauré's "Ici Bas," with lyrics by Prudhomme, and the memory of some outdoor photographs, taken by Paul Jsenfels, of dance students in Germany during the 1920s. Their yogic flexibility, their selfless submission to a stream of movement, even their sloping shoulders, so redolent of dancers in that decade, were translated for Cohen into a sweeping, pavane-like cameo that showcased her long legs, supple waist, and shy demeanor. For the compact and muscular Nicole Berger, a young dancer with an astonishing technique that permits her to seem to float or to fall with a kind of coltish grace, he developed a plummeting fall over the front of one foot, variations of which he placed in several dances for her, culminating in her solo to "Someone to Watch Over Me," where the fall was so juicy and so slow that one could hardly believe it was happening at all. (Caines put the fall in one of his own dances as well. His 6'1" frame, falling, folds up on one hair-raising breath, like a magician's prop.)

"Arias" is an outpouring of creative adrenaline, and its richness in its original form will be too much for some dancegoers (if, that is, the resources can be mustered to perform it again in its entirety). Caines has already tried streamlining it: at the Chashama Theatre on 42nd Street in August, he mounted a half-hour version, with Burnham, Hess, Cohen, Montano, and the pianist Argine Safari, and he has plans to use individual sections as seeds for new dances in the future. I preferred the longer version, whose abundance reinforces the emotional overflow

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of the Italian songs; but it was fascinating to see him summarily and radically edit his work for the requirements of a different venue.

Caines is a genuinely surprising artist. The same month, for the "Deli Dances" series, where dancers performed in Chashama's storefront window, he constructed two installations. In one, wearing shorts and an eyeshade, he simply slept (or tried to sleep) on a mat for two hours, with a small collection of over-the-counter remedies for insomnia lined up next to him. In the second, he slept—this time in pajamas, with a blanket—while Hess, in a nightgown, meditated with her back to the street; at half-hour intervals, marked by an alarm clock, they exchanged places and activities. During the total of four hours that these installations lasted, hundreds of passers-by stopped to comment (and to smile) in perhaps a score of languages. Some of them remarked on the smallest details, such as the names of the herbal preparations. They studied the cover of a novel near Caines's head (it was *Elective Affinities*). They tapped on the glass to try to get him to acknowledge their presence. He told me later that after the third tap, he learned that if he sighed or shifted his weight slightly when they knocked, he satisfied their demands and they stopped.

Some day, I have no doubt, he will put that lesson into play in a dance. At the moment, for November performances at The Construction Company, Caines is preparing a trio to four World War I-era songs by Hindemith, with tragic lyrics by the poet Christian Morgenstern. The songs are rarely performed and, until Montano tackled them this year, they seem never to have been recorded. When I asked what the dance would look like, Caines spoke of spiders, lobsters, bitter drops, and black angels. "It's going to be pretty dark," he said. I was not filled with foreboding. Darkness is bearable, it is even to be welcomed, in an artist who is also a master of light. ■

The Information Specialist

By STEPHEN KOTKIN

Godfather of the Kremlin: Boris Berezovsky and the Looting of Russia by Paul Klebnikov

(Harcourt, Inc., 400 pp., $28)

Sale of the Century: Russia's Wild Ride from Communism to Capitalism by Chrystia Freeland

(Crown Business, 389 pp., $27.50)

I.

AMID THE COLLECTIVE hysteria that passes for reporting and commentary on Russian affairs, perhaps no issue incites more misinformed commotion than that of "the oligarchs." And among the oligarchs, the king of the hysteria is Boris Berezovsky. The diminutive, excitable, eyebrow-dancing tycoon, writes Paul Klebnikov, "once told the *Financial Times* that he and six other financiers controlled 50 percent of the Russian economy and had arranged Yeltsin's re-election in 1996." Yes, he did say that. But could such boasting have been remotely true?

Klebnikov abjures the path of ridicule open before him. Nor does he have much time for Berezovsky's grand failures, such as the scheme to seize control of Russia's gas monopoly—$9 billion in admitted export revenue—which came to absolutely naught (aside from turning the well-connected George Soros into an implacable foe). Instead Klebnikov gives us three hundred harrowing pages to convey that Berezovsky is the "godfather of godfathers." When Klebnikov first invoked the g-word, in a *Forbes* profile in December 1996, Berezovsky sued for libel. Recently, the Russian won the right to sue the American magazine in a British court. With the appearance of *Godfather of the Kremlin*, however, it may be time for Berezovsky to sue Klebnikov for impersonating his publicity agent.

BORIS ABRAMOVICH BEREZOVSKY was born in Moscow in January 1946, a baby boomer. Klebnikov provides no details of Berezovsky's childhood or early adulthood, except to note that his subject took a degree in electronics and computer science at Moscow's Forestry Institute, a cover for work on the Soviet space program. In 1970, Berezovsky earned the equivalent of a doctorate at the Mechanical-Mathematical Department of Moscow University. The previous year he had taken up an appointment at the Control Sciences Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, where he would spend the next two decades, first as a researcher and ultimately as Corresponding Member. He wrote several dozen scientific articles and three monographs about complex systems and information management (none of which are cited or quoted in Klebnikov's book). He helped to establish and directed a research team for the study of systems design, which was called cybernetics—a term taken from the American Norbert Wiener, who coined it in the late 1940s for the science of information and information systems control. As we shall see, Berezovsky remains an information specialist.

Klebnikov presents the tycoon as the poster boy, if not also the explanation, for everything that has gone wrong in Russia since 1991: the "failure [sic] of democracy and capitalism," "the robbery of the century," "the corruption and crony capitalism epitomized by Boris Berezovsky," and so on. But Klebnikov also works against himself, showing in some of his book's best passages the extraordinary degree to which shady market practices became widespread already in the Soviet period. He also weaves a discussion of the pre-oligarch patterns of oligarch behavior: the channels of secret financing for foreign Communist parties, the KGB shell companies and banks in offshore locations, the foreign trade contracts rigged to evade international laws, the old tax treaty with Cyprus permitting KGB money laundering operations, and the covert operations windfalls derived from secret sales of Soviet timber and oil abroad at world prices. What his book superbly demon-

STEPHEN KOTKIN's new book, *The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000*, will be published by Oxford University Press next fall.

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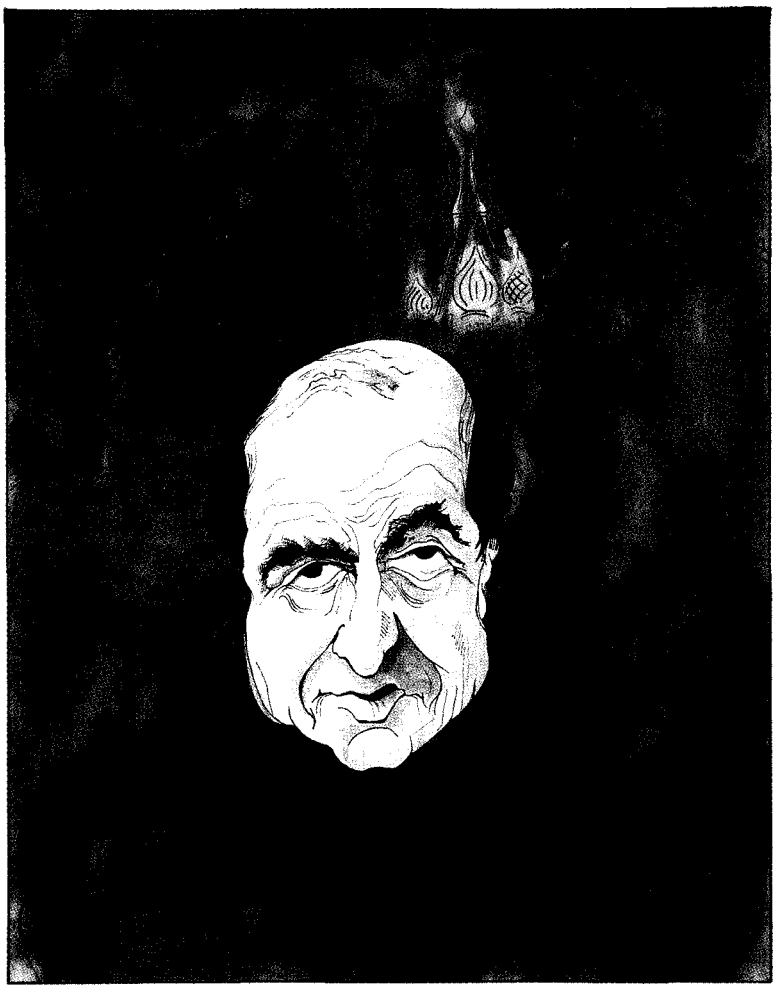
strates, but does not argue, is that, despite the many levels of discontinuity before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the crookedness and breakdown of the old and the crookedness and breakdown of the new are of a piece.

At the same time Klebnikov misses the extent to which Berezovsky (along with Vladimir Putin) was a product of unsuccessful Soviet-era economic policies. In 1965, Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin tried to introduce greater flexibility for enterprises and other innovations to overcome sluggishness, but the invasion of Czechoslovakia three years later undercut the will for experimentation. Instead, in the 1970s and 1980s, the Kremlin placed a big bet on the computerization of production and planning, and on the acquisition of Western technology, despite Cold War restrictions on transfers. Putin's KGB colleagues in East Germany set up front companies and conducted remarkably successful industrial espionage. Completely independent of this, Berezovsky worked on making Soviet industrial processes more efficient.

Just as very few of the KGB's numerous acquisitions made it into lumbering Soviet enterprises, so computerization failed to take off. By the 1970s, close to 100 percent of American firms with more than 500 employees had mainframe computers. In the Soviet Union, only one-third of the equivalent enterprises did. By the 1980s, the Soviet Union had 200,000 microcomputers, while the United States had 25 million—a number that was about to skyrocket. The bet on "perfecting" the planned economy lost. Berezovsky, like Putin, was part of the debris.

Here Klebnikov picks up the story, noting that one of Berezovsky's responsibilities involved consulting for the Soviet automaker AvtoVaz, which had been built in the 1960s by Fiat. AvtoVaz was a Soviet showcase—in other words, a monument to monumentalism. It made more cars than any other factory in the world, with an assembly line a full mile and a quarter long. Klebnikov remarks that "it took AvtoVaz thirty times the man-hours to produce a lousy car that it took a U.S. or Japanese factory to produce a good one." Yet one person's white elephant is another person's fountain of gold. In May 1989, when Mikhail Gorbachev revived and expanded some of Kosygin's measures, legalizing small capitalist-like enterprises, Berezovsky formed a "joint venture" with the Italian firm Logo Systems in Turin and the general director of AvtoVaz. Joint ventures were meant to encourage foreign investment and technology transfers, for which they received tax advantages and could transfer profits abroad. They became an ideal legal instrument for a time-honored Soviet practice: free use of the resources of state companies for private gain.



Boris Berezovsky by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

As the planned economy imploded, Berezovsky, like tens of thousands of others, was vigorously rearranging the pieces. His new company, LogoVaz, was supposed to supply automation software, but it became instead a middleman for selling AvtoVaz cars. The factory, like innumerable post-Soviet enterprises whose bilking expanded, was selling its products, Lada jalopies and Niva Jeeps, to Berezovsky and his partner, the carmaker's general director, at a loss—even though the population's demand for the cheap cars knew no bounds. It was by such means that "red directors" and their associates "privatized" and stripped the assets of state property across eleven time zones. This happened long before anyone from Harvard or Washington arrived to advise the "young reformers" about privatization. Conveniently, there was no worry that without the revenue side (auto sales) the cost side (auto production) would bring on insolvency at AvtoVaz, since governments continued to issue Soviet-style credits to the giant employer, or simply allowed it not to pay its electricity bills.

Berezovsky parlayed an obscure joint venture to sell software into the country's most extensive network of car dealerships, which accounted for 10 percent of national sales. This alchemy required more than connections to a red director and Moscow officials, and more than a talent for rudimentary flim flam. The early 1990s in Russia was a time when Soviet-era criminals came up from the underground, aping the gangsters in pirated American videos, riding Kalashnikov-stuffed Land Cruisers without license plates, and launching grenade attacks to expand "market share." Cash auto sales were especially violent. For security and enforcement, in the absence of a civil service, and a reliable police and judicial system, Berezovsky appears to have employed a private army of Chechens. By 1993, they were besieged in a "mob" turf war by Russian gangs. On June 7, 1994, as Berezovsky's armored Mercedes 600 ambled down a Moscow street, a remote control bomb detonated. It was the capital's most powerful explosion (in a highly competitive year). "Berezovsky stumbled out of his car, his clothes smoldering," Klebnikov writes. "His burns were severe, requiring months of treatment in a Swiss clinic." His bodyguard lost an eye. His driver was decapitated.

It comes as no surprise, perhaps, that Berezovsky had already sought to diversify. Back in 1991, he had ditched his Italian software partner Logo systems, reincorporating LogoVaz as a joint ven-

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ture with the Swiss trading firm André & Cie and the all-important carmaker AvtoVaz. The new LogoVaz obtained a privileged export license from the Ministry of Foreign Trade, signed by the minister Pyotr Aven (today a top businessman associated with Putin). Domestic prices for oil, aluminum, and strategic raw materials had not been liberalized, and Berezovsky, like many others with their export licenses in hand, sold them abroad at world prices. The sizeable differentials brought in really big dough, and Berezovsky acquired choice spreads in Moscow, London, and southern France. When pyramid schemes emerged as the next frontier, he got a piece of that action, too—in partnership, again, with the director of AvtoVaz, as well as with Alexander Voloshin, who later became head of the presidential administration at the end of Boris Yeltsin's second term, and retains that position under Putin.

ALL OF THIS is well known. Klebnikov's contribution lies in exposing Berezovsky's next move. When the Soviet-era airline, Aeroflot, was partially privatized—49 percent went to workers and managers, while 51 percent remained in state hands—Berezovsky managed to install his own people from LogoVaz to run the business on behalf of the state's controlling packet. He also set up a Swiss company called Andava, in partnership with his Aeroflot manager, to handle the airline's billing and foreign banking operations. Andava squeezed Aeroflot for commissions, but according to Klebnikov it "performed no task that Aeroflot could not perform itself."

Klebnikov should know: he visited Andava and a related company in Lausanne, and found few employees and little activity. Despite huge operating profits, he writes, the airline was losing money and its planes were being impounded for failure to pay for leasing. Klebnikov shows that Aeroflot paid usurious fees not just to Andava, but also to a string of companies, which shared the same managers, bankers, accountants, and, presumably, owner. Berezovsky himself once bragged to Russia's leading newspaper *Kommersant*—which he later bought, with the help of a front man—that he intended to "privatize" the profits of Russia's major airline. Klebnikov broke the Andava story in *Forbes* in early 1997, and it was picked up in the Russian and Swiss press. A criminal investigation, alleging $200 million to $300 million in illegal transfers, was launched.

In March 1997, however, Boris Yeltsin's son-in-law, Valery Okulov, arrived as Aeroflot's new general director, and not long thereafter the airline was exempted from the currency repatriation rules of the Russian Central Bank. This, presumably, was done to offer retroactive protection from charges of misdirecting Aeroflot money. In 1999, the offices of Aeroflot, Andava, and other companies in Russia and Switzerland were raided, Okulov fired all LogoVaz people, and Berezovsky lost whatever control he had over Aeroflot's cash flow. A warrant was issued for his arrest—the first and only in his hectic career—and then quickly rescinded. He claims to have long ago severed his connections to the Swiss-based companies under investigation. The case remains open.

How did an auto dealer and commodities trader who was almost killed by a gangland bomb come to know a son-in-law of the Russian president? Klebnikov rehearses the familiar story, told by Yeltsin's intimate and bodyguard, Aleksandr Korzhakov, of how the president's ghostwriter and surrogate son Valentin Yumashev brought Berezozvsky into the Kremlin on the pretext of publishing Yeltsin's second memoir. (This was the memoir that was designed to explain why he had to bomb the mutinous parliament in October 1993.) An important supporting reference from the well-known AvtoVaz general director—whom Yeltsin had considered for prime minister in 1992—helped to overcome any hesitancy about the then obscure Berezovsky. He brought out the book quickly and handsomely, depositing "royalties" in a London bank account for the president, or delivering bricks of cash ("from book sales") directly to the Kremlin.

As a reward, Berezovsky became a member of the Presidential Tennis Club, the center of court society. One member of the club, Korzhakov, who ran the Kremlin while Yeltsin lay in hospital or moodily disappeared, became a special target of Berezovsky's attention. The car dealer also befriended Tanya Dyachenko, Yeltsin's favorite daughter, on whom he bestowed a Niva off-roader and then a Chevrolet. When Berezovsky began bragging about his tight links with "the family," long-time insiders became afraid to cross him. This was the information specialist's method: the more he talked up his connections, the more power he began to exercise in practice. It was just a matter of time before he realized that he needed his own media.

II.

EVEN THOUGH Channel 1 of Russian state television reached one hundred and eighty million potential viewers throughout the former Soviet Union, a result of thirty years of investment, few people seem to have understood its power and its importance. Using his point man Badri Patarkatsishvili, an all-purpose fixer who had worked in the auto repair business in Georgia before 1991, Berezovsky's LogoVaz got a piece of Channel 1's advertising sales, which were handled by Sergei Lisovsky. Then Berezovsky began lobbying Korzhakov, and on occasion Yeltsin, to privatize the station, promising, evidently, that it would be the President's station and repel the attacks against him in other media.

But someone else had already raised the idea of privatizing Channel 1: Vlad Listyev, a distinguished producer and probably the country's most popular TV host. To get the network out from under the state, Listyev tried to enlist Berezovsky's help. Instead Berezovsky helped himself. In late 1994, the Kremlin announced the creation of a new company called ORT (Russian Public Television), in which it sold a 49 percent stake. There was no auction, of course, and the tycoon put up some chump change for his acknowledged 8 percent stake, doling out the other 41 percent of private shares to surrogates. But Listyev battled to retain control. On March 1, 1995, he was found on his apartment stairwell landing, shot in the head.

In the completely unregulated Republican paradise that is Russia, being called a gonif is perhaps not the most stinging indictment. No, the stinger of Klebnikov's book is the Listyev murder. And yet he can marshal only circumstantial speculation and innuendo. At the book's outset, Klebnikov announces his intention to be as conservative as possible in piecing together "the fragments of truth" from interviews and rumors, though he warns that it is necessary to "bridge the gaps with assertions." "As I looked into Berezovsky's meteoric career," he begins, "I discovered a history replete with bankrupt companies and violent deaths." He soon adds, however, that "there is no evidence that Berezovsky was responsible for any of the deaths."

SUCH IS THE challenge of this prosecutorial book. To connect Berezovsky to the most grisly events, Klebnikov quotes the tycoon's published denials. To illustrate Berezovsky's profitable commodities trading, Klebnikov describes another company. After a long set piece about a corrupt aluminum dealer named Marc Rich, Klebnikov writes that "there is no evidence that Berezovsky ever did business with Marc Rich or even met him." Then why, in a book on Berezovsky, mention Rich, and link him to Berezovsky, even with a denial? "It is not impossible," Klebnikov explains in a footnote, "that LogoVaz was fronting for Marc Rich."

Many times Klebnikov repeats Korzha-

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kov's allegation that Berezovsky "begged him" repeatedly to kill another oligarch, Vladimir Gusinsky, apparently to soften the reader for the coming Listyev murder suspicions. Only late in the text do we learn that Korzhakov's allegation emerged as part of a "sleaze war" in the autumn of 1996. Klebnikov's information about Berezovsky being a suspect in the Listyev murder comes from an anonymous source in the Moscow city vice squad—which reports to Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, a close associate of Gusinsky, who is Berezovsky's arch-enemy.

Klebnikov emphasizes that right after the murder, detectives "swarmed" LogoVaz headquarters. With Yeltsin out of town, Berezovsky went to Korzhakov and made a video appeal to the President, arguing that the murder was a setup of Berezovsky to harm the president. Klebnikov reprints a purported transcript of the video from the Russian press, and asserts that Korzhakov protected Berezovsky. (The men in charge of the investigation were fired: they worked for the city and Mayor Luzhkov, who was then one of Korzhakov's prime targets.) Berezovsky has denied involvement, in an interview with Klebnikov and elsewhere. The author notes that investigators also questioned Lisovsky. Listyev had announced his intention to break Lisovsky's monopoly on allocating advertising sales on February 20, 1995, eight days before being killed. The murder has never been solved. Berezovsky came to control the network.

To recap, Berezovsky paid perhaps a few million bucks for his lucrative AvtoVaz car dealership, and nothing for his control over Aeroflot's nifty cash flow, and $320,000 for his minority ownership and full control of the country's dominant TV network. And when his pyramid scheme went bust, he walked away unscathed, with around $50 million. (On Wall Street, he would be feted as a genius.) Next came oil. Just before the sleaze privatizations of 1995-1996 were scheduled to close, a new company, Sibneft or Siberian Oil, appeared out of nowhere; and with the rationale that the "president's" TV network (Channel 1) needed cash, Korzhakov helped guide Sibneft to Berezovsky and his partner Roman Abramovich, an oil trader and close associate of Leonid Dyachenko, the President's son-in-law. They paid about $100 million, after someone else's bid of $170 million was "disqualified."

Most recently, Berezovsky and Abramovich also appear to have acquired a major stake in the aluminum smelting business. Klebnikov writes about Berezovsky's "initiative" in 1999 to take over the aluminum business; but insiders say that the deal was the work of Gazprom's chairman, Rem Vyakhirev, who had been fighting over aluminum plants with Anatoly Chubais, the head of the United Energy power monopoly, a major Gazprom customer (and deadbeat). Vyakhirev, whose job Berezovsky had once connived to take, brought in Berezovsky and Abramovich to undercut Chubais, under the ancient principle that the enemy of my enemy is a useful tool for screwing my enemy.

Cars, commodities trading, airline revenues, oil, aluminum: add it up, and pretty soon it begins to sound like money. And it was. But it was also a lot of noise. Have Berezovsky's dimensions ever really approached the big, swinging depiction in the press? Even Klebnikov acknowledges that Berezovsky was far from Russia's biggest commodities trader. He was indeed "only one of a score of new business magnates," and "by no means the wealthiest."

Consider also that in 1995 the supposedly all-powerful tycoon lost his contract to be the dealer for AvtoVaz. While Berezovsky's companies were handling Aeroflot's perfectly respectable cash stream, Klebnikov could have noted that the other tycoons' private banks were managing the billion-dollar superfunds of the Finance Ministry: state customs duties and national tax receipts. It would have been worth mentioning, too, that Berezovsky only accidentally backed into Aeroflot. Gusinsky had secured the Aeroflot

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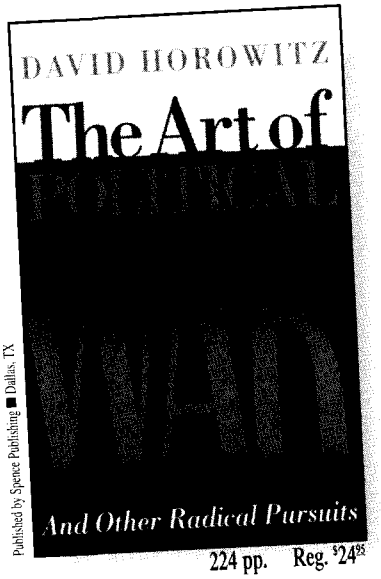

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account, as a government decree announced, but then an exposé—in one of Gusinsky's newspapers!—about an "incentive" (free shares in a Siberian tin factory paid to the Kremlin point man on the deal) caused a reversal of the decision. Be that as it may, Berezovsky eventually lost his grip on Aeroflot, as on AvtoVaz. And during the giveaway privatizations, other players acquired much bigger companies, especially in oil. True, Berezovsky was later handed a major share of Russia's valuable aluminum production, but only after having been rebuffed trying to grab the real prize, gas. In sum: the editors at *Forbes*, which once estimated Berezovsky's net worth at $3 billion, do not bother with an estimate anymore.

III.

ALL THAT LOOTING, and late in the book Klebnikov reveals that Berezovsky "was perpetually strapped for cash." How's that? Sure, his expenses on the villas, the private plane, the children's boarding schools, the security, the compromising dossiers, the politicians, and so on, were substantial—but the "godfather of godfathers" strapped for cash? Klebnikov does not explain. I would suggest that Berezovsky's multifarious—and often disorganized ventures leaked money like a sieve. In the Aeroflot shenanigans, Klebnikov implies that all the skimmed cash went to the top guy, but Berezovsky's "people" were no doubt taking substantial cuts for themselves up and down the line. The same goes for the oil business, and the relationship with Abramovich, whose apparent looting of Sibneft Klebnikov mentions but fails to assess adequately. As for Berezovsky's appropriation of huge sums associated with Yeltsin's re-election campaign in 1996, Klebnikov, citing embezzlement estimates of between $200 million and $300 million, does not explain how many people had access to the money stream, and who stole from whom. Within the looting, there was looting.

Anyone who has spent time observing Berezovsky from the inside, the people he receives, the phone calls, the brainstorming sessions, can see that he is not especially focused on the details of business. His operation, run out of the old Smirnoff mansion, which he refurbished and renamed LogoVaz House, resembles a Russian novelist's depiction of life on a nobleman's estate, with concentric circles of favorites, "hunting" partners, and lackeys, as well as musicians, painters, actors, and other sponges. Wherever Berezovsky, known as "Borya," moves in, they move in right behind him, considering anything that they encounter theirs for the taking.

The "baron," who busies himself with grand strategies, complex intrigues, and socializing—ultimately they are all the same thing—has neither the steady temperament nor the steady technique to discipline the moveable kleptocratic feast. He knows it, and they know it. They pay him with flattery, and with the implementation of directives or initiatives, and in some cases with genuine talent. What keeps the whole flotsam afloat is his delight in hosting the endless party, in proper Russian style, as well as his shrewd intelligence and his engaging sociability, his access to the court and layers of government, and his spactacular skill at projecting an image.

IN THE END, it all comes down to information. Berezovsky, with Korzhakov's assistance, is alleged to have set up a private electronic eavesdropping firm, which relied on KGB expertise and state-of-the-art technology, and gathered material for blackmail. As Deputy Secretary under the president of the Security Council, and later as Executive Secretary of the CIS, Berezovsky made endless high-level contacts, picking up cell phone numbers throughout the central and provincial bureaucracy and the former Soviet republics. In the corridors and the dachas of the political and propertied class, in the Chechen hills, or among the numerous journalists whom Berezovsky employs or supports, ingratiators came to understand that the quickest way to his good graces, and his money, was to call him with the latest scoop. Whatever he learned of before a public announcement he would rush to claim as his own idea, and the media, including those he does not own, would take his assertions of patrimony at face value, flattering his vanity and increasing their viewership or the circulation.

Only the tiniest number of people has seen all the way behind the curtain. One is Sergei Kiriyenko, the wunderkind chosen (briefly) by Yeltsin as prime minister between the long-serving gas king Chernomyrdin and the academic-diplomat Primakov. Kiriyenko (a.k.a. Bambi) demystified the Berezovsky phenomenon for Klebnikov. "After spending five months at my job," the fired prime minister told the author,

> I got the impression that all the stories that Berezovsky tells about his ability to influence the president directly are pure fiction. Berezovsky is able to project a demonic image quite brilliantly. He does this thanks to the fact that he has access to good information and as soon as he finds out that someone, somewhere, is trying to do something, he immediately appears in public with a similar suggestion, so that the next day, everyone will think that it was done because Berezovsky mentioned it.

Here was the Eureka moment for Klebnikov; but he rolls right over it. In the pages that follow, he goes on to discuss Berezovsky's promotion and removal of prime ministers, without adducing any evidence for these colorful claims, though he does pause to concede that Berezovsky did not control the government "completely." In Klebnikov's account, nothing is beyond the evil genius, not "mastermind[ing] two successful presidential elections (in 1996 and 2000)" and placing "his chosen candidate on the throne," not instigating the Second Chechen War. The tycoon is made to appear ubiquitous and omnipotent, just as he would like it to appear.

CHRYSTIA FREELAND DOES not share Klebnikov's grasp of the Soviet inheritance in corruption or gangsterism, but as the former Moscow bureau chief of the *Financial Times* she enjoyed access to several dozen top players, and by effective juxtapositions she punctures their individual puffery. In the case of Berezovsky, for example, she shows in her book that although some meetings of the Yeltsin re-election effort in 1996 took place at LogoVaz House, a great many people helped to organize the campaign, above all Anatoly Chubais and Igor Malashenko. (Berezovsky himself once told *Kommersant* that the key was bringing the president's younger daughter Tanya into the team, and opening a direct channel to the reclusive president, and that this had been Valentin Yumashev's idea.)

Of course, whatever the work of political operatives and the media manipulation, tens of millions of educated Russians went to the polls, and the candidates who lost were poor campaigners with circumscribed appeal. To guard against losing sight of a country while illuminating the world of "the oligarchs," Freeland follows her high-jinks narratives of scams and crashes with "working family" interviews. Her account of the falling-ins and falling-outs among the high and whining exhibits a keen appreciation of the interplay between "oligarch" back-stabbing and co-dependency. By contrast, her adherence to the fiction of "young reformers," whom she calls "McKinsey Revolutionaries," introduces the air of a morality play; but this characterization is falsified by her own narrative, let alone by what she neglects to report, such as the shifty Chubais reign at the United Power monopoly. Some readers may also feel that even as Freeland diminishes Berezovsky and captures the studied duplicity of the "blue blood" oligarch Vladimir Potanin, she is perhaps less exacting with Vladimir Gusinsky.

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Gusinsky, to make a long and brutish story short, is a Soviet-era black market hustler (jeans, New Age copper bracelets), gypsy cab driver, and youth festival impresario who, during perestroika, founded MOST, a real estate and construction firm that grew fat from city hall contracts under Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, and really fat after MOST 's accounting department became a bank to manage vast public money from Moscow's municipal accounts. This was the basic enrichment scheme that created all the oligarchs, and Gusinsky pioneered it. Gusinsky's easier time with Freeland may result less from sympathy than from sources. Rather than rely on the media echo chamber of self-promotion and denunciation by Berezovsky and Gusinsky, she cross-examines a wide and voluble circle, but Korzhakov adds a wild card: he turned against Berezovsky, but Luzhkov and Gusinsky remain fast allies, leaving us with considerably less first-hand dirt on "the Goose."

IV.

ULTIMATELY, ALL THE fuss surrounding Berezovsky and Gusinsky arises not because they epitomize crony capitalism—the upper ten percent of Russia's 145 million people do that—but because they control the country's top two television stations, ORT and NTV. The eye-popping story of NTV (Independent Television) has never been presented systematically, though Freeland and Klebnikov tell parts of it, as did David Remnick in *Resurrection* and Ellen Mickiewicz in *Changing Channels*. It is a tale of parallel plots, fantastic fortunes, skilled journalism, hyper-commercialism, and crushing overdue debt. Freedom of the press, like any other right, can be sustained only when it is adequately and properly financed.

NTV came about in 1993 on the initiative of Yevgeny Kiselyov, host of Wrap-Up, the popular Sunday night franchise on Channel 1 (the future ORT), and Malashenko, an erstwhile think tank analyst and Gorbachev aide, and latterly a state TV executive. The boss at the state channel drove these two talents to establish their own production company, for which they sought backing from Gusinsky, who suggested doing a whole network that he would finance. Initially, NTV got permission to broadcast a few hours on the regional St. Petersburg channel, also available to viewers in Moscow. During Yeltsin's violent clash with parliament in 1993, the infant network supported the president and began lobbying for the right to broadcast on the more substantial Channel 4.

The "entrepreneurs" appeared to obtain their prize, but then the decree mysteriously "got lost." By way of explanation, Klebnikov points to jealous TV producers, who somehow managed to block a presidential directive but capitulated when Gusinsky threatened to stage a car accident—a piece of entertaining slander put out by Berezovsky. Freeland has the real story: Kiselyov and Malashenko, making the rounds, accidentally discovered that Yeltsin's tennis coach, who kept a Kremlin office, was eyeing Channel 4 for an all-sports network. When assured that NTV would have extensive sports programming, he stepped aside. The elated duo paid a licensing fee that was all license and no fee, for one of only a handful of national TV stations.

Klebnikov aptly describes NTV's early programming—during the six prime time hours on what had been the country's educational channel—as "pornography, horror, and gore (even by American standards)." He also observes that the fledgling venture developed lively and popular news programs. These came in handy when it lucked into the gruesome First Chechen War of 1994-1996, which as Mickiewicz recounts, boosted ratings "suddenly and substantially." NTV had reporters on the frontline, gave airtime to the Chechen side, and showed images that exposed official lies and the coverage on Channel 1. Korzhakov and others in the Kremlin went berserk. With its license at stake, NTV became more cautious in 1995, as Freeland notes, broadcasting some government statements on the war that its producers knew to be false.

Still, it continued to let the images of disorganized slaughter speak for themselves. In just two years, NTV emerged as a force to be reckoned with on the Russian scene. It was largely in response to NTV's coverage of Chechnya that President Yeltsin and Korzhakov decided to cede control of ORT to a jealous Berezovsky. "Portraying Gusinsky as a menace," Freeland writes, "helped to enhance Berezozvsky's own power." Indeed. Yet in a perverse way, the establishment of ORT may also have helped save NTV, for it made license revocation seem less urgent. More importantly for the new network, in March, 1996 Malashenko signed on as chief media operative for the Yeltsin re-election campaign. NTV collaborated out of a mixture of conviction and self-interest: it opposed the Communist candidate for president, and it sought the rights to Channel 4's entire broadcast day. "We understood," Malashenko told Freeland, "that if Yeltsin won the elections, then we would get that channel." In the fall, after the electoral victory, NTV did get the extended hours, doubling its airtime. Russia now had not one but two Rupert Murdochs.

MALASHENKO TOLD David Remnick, without elaborating, "that television turned out to be an 'incredibly profitable' business." That is a mysterious statement. The entire television advertising market in Russia is estimated at no more than $200 million, which is not enough to operate NTV and ORT, let alone the full spectrum of stations. Whatever its political value, television in Russia certainly looks like an invitation to financial bankruptcy. NTV has survived only because the gas monopoly, in which the government is the largest shareholder, made a substantial investment in the station, in exchange for a 30 percent stake—which has grown to nearly half as Gazprom extended "loans" to NTV that were pledged against shares and are unpaid. ORT, which is 51 percent state-owned and is therefore supposed to receive federal budget financing, is in roughly the same boat: in the spring of 1996, according to Mickiewicz, it received just $30 million of the $220 million necessary to cover operating expenses from the government. Berezovsky as minority owner may have supplied some funding, but unpaid debts accumulated.

But in a sense Malashenko was right. People in Russian television have been making very good money. Mickiewicz writes of "kickbacks and payola determining whose songs were played, whose firm was covered as a news item," and of Duma politicians looking for coverage who must pay their way on the box. Elections are El Dorado for the networks. (Sound familiar?) One executive told Mickiewicz in 1993 that "some 82 percent of all television airtime had been sold, or 'ordered' by interested parties," though she concedes that over time the extent of camouflaged infomercials "was extremely difficult to identify." Often, Mickiewicz notes, "it was the individual correspondent, not the channel, who sold [the option of becoming] news stories." At NTV, the process may be more organized, or more hierarchical. At the same time, according to people with direct experience, rates for planting a two-minute "news" piece on NTV have declined over the years from around $30,000 to $10,000. Other stations, such as the fully private TV-6—acquired by Berezovsky when its co-founder, CNN, pulled out—have taken to tracking down victims of companies that paid for "news stories" shown on NTV to advance their interests.

The opportunity to become the subject of a positive feature or to defame one's enemies, all in the guise of news, is for sale to "sponsors" on both Russia's main networks, but the level of professionalism on NTV is superior, and up to now it has provided far more of a counterweight

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to the government. Following the brief arrest of Gusinsky in June, which incongruously transformed him into a martyr, the Kremlin pressured NTV's sugardaddy, Gazprom, a partially state-owned company, to use the network's massive outstanding debt to force an ownership transfer. After releasing Gusinsky, who fled and remains abroad, the Kremlin pushed through the appointment of its own heavy, and one-time Gusinsky casualty, as chief of a new gas monopoly subsidiary, called Gazprom Media, which has taken charge of NTV forfeiture "negotiations," in tandem with the state prosecutor. Over at debt-ridden ORT, not long ago, Putin's Kremlin renewed Berezovsky's operating license—but more recently he, too, was served with an ultimatum to relinquish his 49 percent stake or face criminal charges. Future control over both ORT and NTV remains unclear, and in the balance hangs the fate of both Berezovsky and Gusinsky as "oligarchs." What does not hang in the balance is the fate of Russia, whose daily life and far-flung regions are almost invisible on the Moscow-based "national" networks.

OUTRAGED AT WHAT he sees in Russia, Klebnikov thinks that he has the answer. Even though much of what appears in his book has nothing to do with Boris Berezovsky, Klebnikov relentlessly insists upon the tycoon's centrality with such hyperbole as "he hijacked the state." But this mistakes symptom for disease. The Russian state consists of millions of central and provincial officials, who are mostly controlled by no one, and certainly not by President Putin. This disarray in the state inhibits the establishment of either an effective regulatory civil service or an effective dictatorship (let alone a "return to totalitarianism"). This is also what allows Berezovsky—and many, many others at various levels—to poach and to "privatize" select officials, systematically or on a one-time basis. If there really were a Russian state to hijack, Berezovsky would not exist as a phenomenon whose significance virtually everyone (not least in Washington) loves to inflate.

Freeland, who offers a rounder and subtler criticism of the oligarchs, is skeptical that Putin can "discipline" or sweep them away, popular as such a step would be domestically and internationally. The problem extends beyond specific individuals, who would simply be replaced. Reaching for the big picture, Freeland compares Russia to an heiress consuming her inheritance. "After a decade of almost no investment," she concludes, Russia's Soviet-era infrastructure "is beginning to decay." Beginning?

Tragically, it required a Russian submarine to blow itself up, leaving its crew at the ocean floor, beyond rescue by their own navy, for the world to rediscover the banal fact that the Soviet Union has still not finished collapsing, and that Vladimir Putin is still in some ways a career mid-level official with uncertain political instincts and with more problems than power. And then the Promethean Soviet-era television tower incurred a damaging fire, and the Russian president, who was supposed to arrest the decline, howled at the dilapidated state of the country's infrastructure, and the need to do something. He had spent nearly a year sorting out a civil war among the bloated military brass over the direction of military reforms, finally announcing that troop strength would be cut from 1.2 million to 800,000, even though the mobilization for the Second (and ongoing) Chechen War produced well under 100,000, grunts so that mercenaries had to be hired. Putin did win a victory when the Duma passed a flat tax, reducing tax rates. Now if only he could reduce Russia's army of tax collectors, who calculate their own "tax" rates, and often collect for themselves. ■

The Art of the Temporary

By ADAM KIRSCH

Collected Poems in English by Joseph Brodsky edited by Ann Kjellberg

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 540 pp., $30)

JOSEPH BRODSKY, who died in 1996 at the terribly early age of 55, now enjoys at least three posthumous lives. First, and by far most important, is the Russian poet who was frequently called the best poet of his generation, the heir to Akhmatova, Mandelstam, and Tsvetaeva. This body of work is inaccessible to most American readers, this writer included, but Brodsky himself saw it as the heart of his achievement. In 1987, after he received the Nobel Prize, an interviewer asked him if he had won as an American poet of Russian origin or a Russian poet living in America, and he firmly replied: "A Russian poet, an English essayist, and, of course, an American citizen."

Brodsky's second legacy is his uniquely passionate and humanistic defense of poetry, made in the face of Soviet repression and American indifference. He was one of the few writers and thinkers in our time who would argue, without embarrassment, that "poetry occupies a higher position than prose, and the poet, in principle, is higher than the prose writer"; and more, that "literature—and poetry in particular, being the highest form of location—is, to put it bluntly, the goal of our species." Brodsky even made the claim, contrary to his beloved Auden, that literature is of direct moral and political benefit to its readers: "I'll just say that I believe—not empirically, alas, but only theoretically—that for someone who has read a lot of Dickens, to shoot his like in the name of some idea is somewhat more problematic than for someone who has read no Dickens." When Brodsky made such assertions, his audience could not easily dismiss them, because his own life was an example of poetry saving a soul from tyranny.

The story of that life has been told and retold, though seldom by Brodsky himself. ("For a writer to mention his penal experiences," he wrote, "is like dropping names for normal folk.") In his early twenties, he was savaged in the Soviet literary press and hauled before a Leningrad tribunal, which demanded: "Who included you among the ranks of the poets?" His reply—"No one. Who included me among the ranks of human beings?"—has become legendary, but at the time he paid for it with a year and a half in an Arctic labor settlement. Prevented from publishing, Brodsky was eventually expelled from the Soviet Union in 1972, never to see his family or his country again. The courage with which he then remade his life and

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his career in America is equally impressive. Avoiding the emigré's self-pity and parochialism, he resolved to participate in American literary life, and he taught himself to write in English—first critical prose, then translations of his own poetry, and finally original poems.

Which brings us to Brodsky's third, and most problematic, posthumous identity: the English poet. *Collected Poems in English* contains the three volumes of poetry that appeared between 1980 and 1996—*A Part of Speech*, *To Urania*, and *So Forth*—as well as a short section of previously uncollected poems. It is not a complete English edition: it does not include some of the poems written in Russia that appeared in his first English volume, the Penguin *Selected Poems* of 1973, nor—as Ann Kjellberg explains—"translations by other hands of poems in Russian written after 1972 that Brodsky was unable to see through translation during his lifetime." And it is certainly not a complete translation of Brodsky's opus, since—as Kjellberg further explains—"the author was able to render into English about a third of his mature work in Russian." (The Russian originals have just been reissued, in corrected editions, by Slovo/Word Publishers in New York.)

Still, this is an important book, because it provides a comprehensive opportunity to evaluate Brodsky as an American poet. Following the poet's example in *So Forth*, Kjellberg identifies the translator of each poem only in the endnotes, thus issuing "an invitation to the reader to consider the poems as if they were original texts in English." It is hard to know whether Brodsky himself would make this invitation, at least so explicitly. He did write in English, and he did translate his Russian poems; but no one was more alive to the tremendous difficulties of translation, to the incommensurability of languages, especially languages so different as Russian and English. "What a poet actually listens to, what really does dictate to him the next line, is the language," he wrote; "whatever language's gender happens to be, a poet's attachment to it is monogamous, for a poet, by trade at least, is a monoglot." Or, even more emphatically, in his essay on Mandelstam:

> What is called the music of a poem is essentially time restructured in such a way that it brings this poem's content into a linguistically inevitable, memorable focus . . . that horizon vanishes in translations, leaving on the page absorbing but one-dimensional content. . . . What translation has in common with censorship is that both operate on the basis of the "what's possible" principle, and it must be noted that linguistic barriers can be as high as those erected by the state.

The author of those lines would not want readers to pass lightly over the gulf dividing his Russian verse from his English verse. It is impossible to evaluate the *Collected Poems in English* as though they were the work of an American poet—they are not, and they do not read as if they were. Unless this is understood, these poems will be misunderstood. With a few exceptions, they are translations, although the author and the translator are sometimes the same person; and while Brodsky's own translations naturally have a unique status, they are not necessarily definitive.

COURTESY M. SOZZANI

Joseph Brodsky in Venice, 1990

By preserving the organization of Brodsky's three books, the *Collected Poems in English* does not present the poems chronologically, in the order of writing; but it reflects, at least roughly, the order of translation, and this is probably more important. Indeed, the three books more or less correspond to three stages in Brodsky's American career. In the first, largely represented in *A Part of Speech* (1980), he relied on translators and other poets to render his work into English; in the second, the years of *To Urania* (1988), he began to make his own translations, sometimes in collaboration with others, with very mixed results; and in the third, corresponding to *So Forth* (1996), the aims and the methods of his translations changed for the better, and he began to include a number of original English poems.

To read the book from beginning to end, then, is to hear Brodsky's own voice come to the fore—haltingly at first, then more confidently, but never as the voice of a native English writer. In fact, for clarity and poetic decorum, the earliest translations—by a variety of hands, including Anthony Hecht, Richard Wilbur, and Derek Walcott—are the best. When Brodsky begins to direct the translation, this decorum is broken by a more colloquial, humorous, idiosyncratic style, which may or may not be the tone of Brodsky's Russian verse, but certainly seems to be the tone that he wanted for his English verse. The wide-ranging diction, the awkward or jokey rhymes, the rapid progression of thoughts and metaphors: all this often results in confusion, semantic obscurity, tonal uneasiness. And sometimes, for interesting reasons, the poems that seem most ambitious in their conception are the least successful in translation. Their power can be guessed at, perhaps imagined, but not really felt.

What does come through in translation, at every stage in Brodsky's career, is his extremely fertile metaphorical imagination, his delight in significant and unlikely conceits. This is the element of poetry that is always easiest to translate, since it is a relation of ideas more than of words. Where rhythm and rhyme fall away, image and argument can survive. And Brodsky, who read the modernists of the 1930s and John Donne as a young man in Russia, had a great gift for their sort of ironically suggestive metaphors. In his memorial tribute to Stephen Spender, he remarked that reading MacNeice, Spender and Auden "unshackled me," especially by "their common knack for taking a bewildered look at the familiar."

When other elements of a translation fail, these images remind us of the quality of Brodsky's imagination: "death in its speckledness/looks like the vague out-

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lines of Asia"; "This pull in one direction only has made/me something elongated, like a horse's head"; or, best of all, from "The Thames at Chelsea":

> And when you sleep, the telephone
> numbers
> of your past and present blend to
> produce a figure—
> astronomical. And your finger turning
> the dial
> of the winter moon finds the colorless,
> vile
> chirp, "Engaged," and this steady noise
> is clearer than God's own voice.

That poem was written in 1974, and is translated by David Rigsbee; it belongs to Brodsky's early American phase, lucid, the rhymes unobtrusive, the sense coming before the sound.

Yet the same agility and unlikeliness that we admire here can become, when Brodsky himself takes over the translation, rapid and clotted to the point of confusion. Here we see, perhaps, an unsuccessful attempt to transfer into English the nuance and the variety that Brodsky saw as characteristic of Russian poetry:

> *Russian poetry on the whole is not*
> very topical. Its basic technique is one
> of beating around the bush, approaching
> the theme from various angles. The
> clear-cut treatment of the subject matter,
> which is so characteristic of poetry in
> English, usually gets exercised within this
> or that line, and then a poet moves on to
> something else; it seldom makes for an
> entire poem.

This describes fairly well the rapid movement of ideas in "December in Florence," from 1976, one of the first poems that the poet translated himself:

> A man gets reduced to pen's rustle
> on paper, to
> wedges, ringlets of letters, and also, due
> to the slippery surface, to commas and
> full stops. True,
> often, in some common word, the
> unwitting pen
> strays into drawing—while tackling an
> "M"—some eyebrows: ink is more
> honest than
> blood. And a face, with moist words
> inside
> out to dry what has just been said,
> smirks like the crumpled paper
> absorbed by shade.

The number of different conceits packed into these lines makes them very difficult to follow; and the sound, too, is unappealing, in a phrase such as "wedges, ringlets of letters." Most obtrusive of all is the rhyming, which requires unnatural and unrhythmic constructions: "to/wedges," "true,/often, "inside/out."

This insistence on a poem's rhyme scheme, often to the detriment of its sense and even its meter, was not an idle choice. Brodsky wrote often about his principled attachment to strict form. He believed that a translator must carry over the form of the original: "It should be remembered that verse meters in themselves are kinds of spiritual magnitudes for which nothing can be substituted. They cannot be replaced even by each other, let alone by free verse. Differences in meters are differences in breath and in heartbeat." The irony is that, in a poem such as "December in Florence," so much is sacrificed for the sake of the rhyme-scheme that the poem loses the energy that meter should provide; it seems more "written" and less "sung" than free verse. The rhymes strike us intellectually, and we recognize that the original poem was rhymed in a certain way; but they do not serve their purpose in the English poem.

When one compares the translations made by accomplished American poets, the difference is immediately clear. Consider Anthony Hecht's rendition of "Lullaby of Cape Cod":

> Like a carried-over number in addition,
> the sea comes up in the dark
> and on the beach it leaves its
> delible mark,
> and the unvarying, diastolic motion,
> the repetitious, drugged sway of
> the ocean,
> cradles a splinter adrift for a
> million years.

Perhaps this sounds more like Hecht than like Brodsky; but as Brodsky himself wrote, "translation is a search for an equivalent, not for a substitute," and the poem is both clearer and more pleasing for being re-spoken in Hecht's poetic voice.

CERTAIN POETS, WHOSE energies are primarily metaphorical, might not suffer as Brodsky often does in translation. Wislawa Szymborska comes across extremely clearly in English, since she is a genuinely Metaphysical poet; and Yehuda Amichai's *Open Closed Open* is similarly successful. But Brodsky, though lucid and brilliant in his imagery, seems often to be more interested in rhythm, sound, and rhetoric than in idea and argument; and so there is more to be lost. This loss is most acutely felt in some of the sequences in *To Urania*—"Twenty Sonnets to Mary Queen of Scots," "Sextet," "Roman Elegies," "Venetian Stanzas,"—which are translated either by Brodsky alone or with a partner. They feel, as Robert Hass wrote, "like wandering through the ruins of a noble building."

These poems are intelligent, rich in imagery and movement, but too often do not cohere musically or even semantically:

> Oh, a dark eye is obviously more fluent
> in brown furniture, pomegranates,
> oak shutters.
> It's more keen, it's more cordial than a
> blue one;
> to the blue one, though, nothing matters!
> The blue one can always tell the owner
> from the goods, especially before
> closing—
> that is, time from living—and turn the
> latter over,
> as tails strain to look at heads in tossing.

The complex transformations of the last four lines—owner and goods, time and living, heads and tails—seem to me almost impossible to resolve into a single meaning. And something similar takes place in Brodsky's first poems written in English, such as "Allenby Road," from 1981:

> And your closing the shutters unleashes
> the domino
> theory; for no matter what size a lump
> *melts in your throat, the future snowballs*
> each "no"
> to coin a profile by the burning lamp.
> Neither because there is a lot of guilt
> nor because local prices are somewhat
> steep,
> nobody picks this brick pocket filled
> with change that barely buys some sleep.

Even when the sense of a poem is clear, the urgency that comes from well-handled form often decays in translation. "Twenty Sonnets to Mary Queen of Scots," translated by Brodsky with Peter France, proposes the queen as a symbol of romance and doomed passion, in opposition to the prosaic, politics-minded "Good Queen Bess." The sequence is witty, various, and convincing; but it is too halting, rhythmically, to take flight:

> May God send you in others—
> not a chance!
> He, capable of many things at once,
> won't—citing Parmenides—reinspire
> the bloodstream fire, the bone-crushing
> creeps,
> which melt the lead in fillings with desire
> to touch—"your hips," I must delete—
> your lips.

Where Brodsky approaches most nearly the simple, universal themes—in his meditations, his odes, and his sequences—the intellectual content of the poem means less than the particular movement of the language, and the poem

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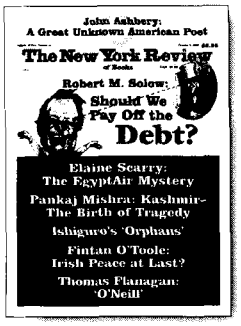

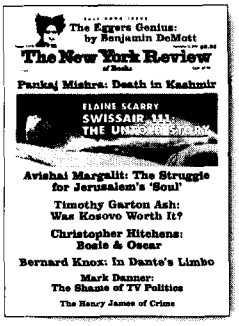

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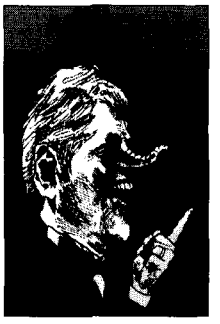

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suffers the more. As a result, his more striking and memorable poems are those with a more limited compass: occasional and political poems, elegies and narratives. In these modes, his ironic understatement and eye for the significant detail—both reminiscent of Auden—come through with great immediacy. "Lines on the Winter Campaign, 1980," about Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan, is a fine example:

> The dreams are identical, as are the
> greatcoats.
> Plenty of cartridges, few recollections,
> and the tang in the mouth of too many
> "hurrahs."
> Glory to those who, their glances
> lowered,
> marched in the sixties to abortion tables,
> sparing the homeland its present stigma.

Those last three lines are truly audacious, in a way that no didactic protest-poet could manage without sounding shrill and offensive. (Imagine how an American poem about Vietnam might use the same idea.) Brodsky is effective because of his restrained tone, his seeming objectivity. In the same way, in "Mexican Divertimento," translated by Brodsky and Alan Myers, he conjures up a banana republic in six lines:

> The constitution is beyond
> reproach. The text with traces of
> leapfrogging
> dictators lies enshrined within
> the National Library, secure beneath
> green bullet-
> proof glass—it should be noted,
> the very same
> as fitted in the President's Rolls-Royce.

And in "An Admonition," which might be read as an homage or a response to Auden's "Atlantis," Brodsky invents an Asia that is part historical, part sinister fable, through a series of instructions:

> If somebody yells "Hey stranger!"
> don't answer. Play deaf and dumb.
> Even though you may know it,
> don't speak the tongue.
> Try not to stand out— either in profile or
> full face; simply don't wash your face
> at times. What's more,
> when they rip a cur's throat with a saw,
> don't cringe.
> Smoking, douse your butts with spittle.
> And besides, arrange
> to wear gray—the hue of the earth—
> especially underclothes,
> to reduce the temptation to blend
> your flesh with earth.

The concrete, the detailed, may not be Brodsky's only mode, or even his most characteristic mode; but it is the mode that comes across best in English, partially because, as we have seen, it shows the influence of English poetry. Brodsky often said that what he valued in English was precisely this specificity, in contrast to the rhetoric and the emotion of Russian. In an interview in 1987, he observed: "In Russian, what matters is the combination; the main question you ask yourself when you write is whether it sounds good. In English you ask yourself whether it makes sense...It's a language of reason, whereas Russian is basically a language of texture."

Of course, English too has its textures, and it is quite possible to be rhetorical and imprecise in the language of Shelley and Hart Crane. Yet one can imagine that a part of Brodsky's novelty, as a Russian poet, was to import this particular vision of English into his native language, much as Eliot made over the French of Laforgue and Corbière into English. And, ironically, when Brodsky crosses the border back into English, his innovations are more familiar than they would be to his original audience.

IT IS IN the last section of the *Collected Poems in English*, the poems from *So Forth*, that Brodsky attains his fullest ease as a translator and an English poet. The poems written in English tend to become more modest, ballad-like, sentimental; but in this restricted compass, there is a purity of tone and meaning that is very pleasing. "Törnfallet" is a muted, Hardyesque love poem:

> I took her in marriage
> in a granite parish.
> The snow lent her whiteness,
> a pine was a witness....
>
> And at night the stubborn
> sun of her auburn
> hair shone from my pillow
> at post and pillar.

(Some of Brodsky's rhymes become almost exact when you imagine the lines spoken in a Russian accent.)

The influence of early Auden, too, is strongly felt in late Brodsky. A poem such as "Anthem" makes excellent use of the meter of "This lunar beauty," raising it from the lyric to the philosophic:

> What I have in common
> with the ancient Roman
> is not a Caesar,
> but the weather.
>
> Likewise, the main features
> I share with the future's
> mutants are those curious
> shapes of cumulus...
>
> then a rational anthem
> sung by one atom
> to the rest of matter
> should please the latter.

Here, too, is one of the clearer instances of the theme that winds its way through this whole volume: the distinction between history and nature, "Caesar" and "weather," cause and effect, determinism and freedom—or, as Brodsky often has it, between Clio, the muse of history, and Urania, the muse of astronomy. It seems almost inevitable that Brodsky, who was pressed so closely by the dialectical-materialist view of history, would rebel, praising instead the unbounded, the free, whether in nature or human nature. His statement of this opposition can sometimes be obscure, and insufficently prepared, as in "Lithuanian Nocturne":

> ...these words, with their fear of
> the morning,
> scattered thinly at midnight by some
> slurring voice—
> a sound more like houseflies
> bravely clicking a tin,
> and which won't satiate
> the new Clio adorning
> checkpoint gowns, but in which
> ever-naked Urania is to rejoice!
> Only she, our Muse
> of the point lost in space, our Muse of
> forgotten
> outlines can assess, and in full,
> like a miser, the use
> of small change, immobility's token
> paid for flights of the soul.

Somewhat awkwardly, Brodsky opposes Clio, who is "gowned" in the uniform of a soldier at a checkpoint, to "ever-naked Urania," who shuns such political divisions, preferring instead to be "lost in space." "Cause" and "effect" are other names for these antagonists; and unless one has this specific meaning of the words in mind, Brodsky's use of them can sometimes sound vague or grandiose, as in "Portrait of Tragedy": "the aria of effect beats cause's wheezes." But if one connects them back to Clio and Urania, the reader can see that "cause"—everything that explains, limits, determines human activity—is being denigrated in favor of "effect," the individual human being allegedly inferior to the cause, but superior in being able to sing.

Specifically, it is the poet who sings the "aria of effect," affirming his freedom and his singularity. And in Brodsky's late poems, this conception of the poet takes on a cosmic dimension, a kind of pantheistic belief that the universe itself delights

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Jerusalem (2)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous clarifying message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Moslem/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that such claim had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem has now again become of immediate interest, in connection with the ongoing peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and with the effort, supported by 93 senators, to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem – reunited and indivisible. Ever since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, all American governments and all American Congresses have confirmed their conviction that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that, once reunited, it should remain indivisible. Before the Six-Day War in 1967, the city was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out, all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed, and Jewish cemeteries desecrated. The various Christian denominations, with churches and sacred places in Jerusalem, operated under the strict control of Moslem authorities.

All this ended in 1967 with the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces and with the reunification of the city. Access to the city and to all holy places became available to everybody. The many religious bodies in the holy city (and in all of Israel) are able to pursue their activities without any restrictions. Jerusalem today is truly a free and open city. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements were finally torn down in Jerusalem.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem and wish it to become the capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state, nobody--not even the Arabs themselves--question the western part of the city to be Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that, despite this universal recognition, the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, the major commercial city, instead of in Jerusalem--Israel's capital--the seat of the Knesset(parliament), the Supreme Court, and of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York, rather than in Washington, D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries, with the sole exceptions of Costa Rica and El Salvador, have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv, rather than in Jerusalem. It is a bizarre situation; all ambassadors and their staffs--including the U.S. Ambassador and his staff--must make almost daily trips to Jerusalem, because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The United States maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in that nation's designated capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

"The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."

Congress in favor of moving Embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their election, both President Clinton and Vice President Gore assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress – both Republican and Democratic – have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem within the next three or four years. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. The U.S. has a lease on a 10-acre embassy lot in Talpiot, a totally Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem. It is to be expected therefore that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy in Israel will indeed be located in Jerusalem – the capital of one of its closest allies.

The reason given for not moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem is that it might violate "Arab sensitivities". While there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Abdullah of Jordan would not jeopardize the lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Even though the PLO would perhaps once again request suspension of the peace talks, it would soon return to the negotiating table. The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal Yassir Arafat once and for all that he will not get U.S. and world support for the division of Jerusalem and for its establishment--in any part of it--as the capital of a new Arab state.

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in his arias—the "rational anthem/sung by one atom/to the rest of matter," or, in "Via Funari":

> In any case, it's no less probable
> that the famous inanimateness
> of the cosmos, tired of its pretty vicious
> infinitude, seeks for itself an earthly
> abode; and we come in handy.

This poem, from 1995, was translated by Brodsky alone, and even this brief excerpt shows that he has moved a long way towards clarity. The half-rhymes or quarter-rhymes are much less obtrusive, so that the poem almost reads like free verse. So, too, in "Vertumnus," from 1990:

> nowadays I sense that behind my back
> also stretches
> a street overgrown with colonnades,
> that at its far end
> also shimmer the turquoise crescents
> of the Adriatic. Their total is, clearly,
> your present, Vertumnus—small change,
> if you will; some loose
> silver with which, occasionally,
> rich infinity
> showers the temporary. Partly out of
> superstition,
> partly, perhaps, because it alone—
> the temporary—is capable of sensation,
> of happiness.

The greater clarity of idea, sense, and movement in the verse from the 1990s makes one regret, all the more, the lack of these things in many of the poems in *To Urania*. Brodsky's mastery of English came very quickly, as his essays attest; and it would be hard to find a native speaker so sensitive to the nuances of the language, as he demonstrates in his close readings of Auden and Frost. But the ability to shape an English poem came later, and in the meantime many of his translations suffered.

EVEN IF BRODSKY knew this, one feels that he would have felt the sacrifice worthwhile, because his decision to write in English was not just an aesthetic one. In his essay "The Conditions We Call Exile," originally a speech delivered to a convention of emigré writers in 1987, he wrote movingly of the psychological dangers of that condition: "the reality of [exile] consists of an exiled writer constantly fighting and conspiring to restore his significance, his leading role, his authority." Turning himself at least partially into an American writer allowed Brodsky to escape this confinement, to lead a literary life in his new country—which he did with astonishing success, becoming the Poet Laureate of the United States.

His love for America and the English language was deep and genuine. In the same lecture, he said that going from Russia to America is, "in many ways, like going home—because [the exile] gets closer to the seat of the ideals which inspired him all along." *Collected Poems in English* is a great testament to that inspiration. If the book does not fully communicate Brodsky's poetic stature, we should not be altogether surprised. To accomplish in poetry what Nabokov or Conrad did in prose is probably impossible; and Brodsky's own translations are always interesting and revealing, even when they are not poetically successful. It would be a shame, however, if this book inhibits any future translator from trying to carry over this Russian music into English. Only when other intelligences, with other linguistic resources, are applied to Joseph Brodsky's work will American readers approach—though never, perhaps, completely attain—a genuine appreciation of its power. ■

A Preserving Place

By PETER N. MILLER

Basel in the Age of Burckhardt: A Study in Unseasonable Ideas by Lionel Gossman

(University of Chicago Press, 608 pp., $40)

I.

"CHICAGO ASKED IN 1893 for the first time the question whether the American people knew where they were driving." Visiting the Columbian Exposition also led Henry Adams to ponder the future. For someone who felt so keenly his mis-education—born into an eighteenth-century family in a nineteenth-century town and living on into the twentieth century—the encounter with technology was disorienting. He recognized that "the child born in 1900 would, then, be born into a new world which would not be a unity but a multiple." The challenge of chaos—"of time, place, morals, forces and motive"—gave him vertigo. And yet, if he was staggered by this challenge, Adams was also fascinated by it. "At the rate of progress since 1800," he wrote, "every American who lived into the year 2000 would know how to control unlimited power. He would think in complexities unimaginable to an earlier mind. He would deal with problems altogether beyond the range of earlier society." How to prepare that child for this future? "All the teacher could hope was to teach it reaction."

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If Adams were German (or if his German were better), he might have referred to his own predicament as being *unzeitgemäss*, "unseasonable," as Lionel Gossman renders it in the subtitle of his splendid book. Adams struggles to turn this sensation of being out of place and in the wrong time to his advantage. Gossman shows us how for a group of thinkers in the second half of the nineteenth century, the "unseasonableness" of Basel made it an ideal vantage point on the birth of the modern elsewhere in Europe. The thinkers who were attracted by the view ended up being able to articulate their own replies to Adams's query about the most appropriate kind of education for the modern age.

The men who dominate Gossman's book, Johan Jacob Bachofen and Jacob Burckhardt, were scions of two of Basel's great families. Both studied in Berlin before returning home to live and work in the shadow of Germany's ascendent political and intellectual might. The former began as a classical scholar and became an anthropologist and a historian of religion; and the latter became the first and still the most famous historian of culture. Gossman's triumph is in showing how much Basel mattered to the formation not only of its illustrious children, but also to the immigrant professors who came there to take up posts until they could get better ones in Germany—and then stayed for the rest of their lives.

This distinguished company included the theologian (who later renounced

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Christ) Franz Overbeck and the philosopher (who later renounced Socrates) Friedrich Nietzsche. These last have only bit parts in this drama, but enough to suggest that Gossman's argument could have been extended still further, perhaps to include their contemporary, and fellow Baseler, the artist Arnold Böcklin. But the organization of the book reflects its priorities: a hundred pages on Basel, followed by another hundred on Bachofen, two hundred on Burckhardt, twenty-five on Overbeck and Nietzsche, and concluding with another twenty-five on Burckhardt.

But why Basel? Gossman's answer is simple: by preserving an early modern way of life—he borrows the term that Thomas Mann used for Lubeck, *geistige Lebensform*, or "spiritual way of life"—into the nineteenth century, Basel made it easier to see the changes engulfing the rest of Europe. Gossman does not simply juxtapose text and context and imply that the latter shaped the former. He makes the stronger and more satisfying claim that his thinkers became "unseasonable" in large part because they came to see the world through Basel-colored lenses. That is why its nineteenth-century history has to occupy such an important place in this work of intellectual history. Indeed, Gossman does for Basel what Carl Schorske did for Vienna: his book is about ideas when it discusses the city and about the city when it discusses ideas. Gossman's learned touch is light, and his eye for detail is reliable. He is the author of articles and books on Basel, eighteenth-century antiquarianism, Edward Gibbon, and Bachofen's controversy with Theodor Mommsen: one could hardly imagine a more thorough preparation for an assault on Mount Burckhardt.

It is easy to forget, in our world of states and national aspirations, that once upon a time, not so long ago, Europe was full of places like Basel: small city-republics governed by oligarchs whose families prospered through trade, and who treated the non-citizen residents in their midst with a paternalistic concern. Located at the last, or the first, navigable spot on the Rhine, Basel became famous and rich during the Renaissance as a high-tech capital home to some of the leading printing houses on the Continent. It remained the wealthiest city in German Switzerland far into the nineteenth century.

Readers of Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, a tale of family business in the old Hansa town of Lubeck, will be familiar with the mentality of Rhineland entrepôts such as Basel. These were cities in which the preservation of the family business and its wealth—in this case from the ribbon and dyeing businesses, out of which emerged some of Switzerland's great pharmaceutical companies—determined the making of municipal policy. In so far as politics could be separated from business, the former took a backseat to the latter. This "Old Europe" of getting and saving gave way only slowly to the bureaucratic embrace of the state. As long as it survived, however, it preserved for anybody who cared to notice a living example of what the celebrated city-republics of the deeper past were like. Residents of towns such as Hamburg and Basel might even have had some native advantage in understanding the sensibility of Renaissance ancestors in Florence and Venice.

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Jacob Burckhardt

Basel survived into the nineteenth century with its old regime essentially unreformed; and despite the Napoleonic Wars, and the formation of the Helvetic Republic in 1798 with its extension of citizenship to all (repealed by the burghers in the post-Napoleonic Restoration), and the intervention of the Federal Diet in 1833 to separate the city from its hinterland and to halve its strength, and the establishment of the unified Swiss state in 1848 (approved in Basel with many abstentions from among the ruling caste), Basel managed to stay that way to the end. A part of its success lay in being a closed community, literally and figuratively. Every Eurailpasser knows that it is almost impossible nowadays to go from Southern to Northern Europe without passing through Basel SBB—often so silently and in the dead of night that its identity is lost on the bleary-eyed traveller. (That, too, is a measure of how much times have changed.)

In Gossman's Basel, some of the biggest internecine squabbling was occasioned by efforts to integrate Basel into the French and German railway networks, owing to this very fear that Basel's distinctiveness would be compromised. More to the point, between 1691 and 1798 Basel only admitted sixty-four people to the rank of citizen. As elsewhere in early modern Europe, debates about whether to admit Jews offer a window into attitudes about political community. They were forbidden to reside in the city from the fifteenth century through the eighteenth century; and then they were permitted to reside there by the Helvetic Republic; and then the privilege was lost again with the collapse of the republic in 1814. Only the Federal emancipation of Jews in 1866, under strong prodding from France and Britain, made Jews into Baselers, though without much support for their new fellow citizens.

A bit like Venice—where the same debates raged, with special intensity, as the city's economic standing declined in the seventeenth century—Basel compensated for the widening gulf between richer and poorer citizens by making citizenship into a prize. Citizenship gave even the poorest weaver a feeling of superiority over the more numerous and often wealthier metics, who comprised more than half of the city's population. The Federal decree of 1874 that permitted citizens of any Swiss canton to vote in any other Swiss canton, like the earlier Venetian move to put citizenship up for sale, had the effect of so diluting its value as to signify the overthrow of the old regime.

The tension between the economic openness that was required to create wealth, especially pronounced in a city that generated a good part of its profit from exchange (trans-shipping and brokerage fees), and the need to avoid social unrest in a city where most residents were without rights, made Baselers reluctant reformers. A single image stands for many words: Basel tore down its medieval walls in the 1870s, whereas liberal, progressive Zurich had done the noble deed in the 1830s.

II.

It would be ungenerous to fault a book of six hundred pages for narrowness of scope; but by not emphasizing how important Basel and Switzerland were to eighteenth-centry social and

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political thinkers, and why, Gossman has made it harder for himself to convey why Basel and Switzerland should matter for us. The paradox is that while in the nineteenth century Basel found itself staring across its borders at societies being swept up by the modern forces of nationalism, mass culture, and industrialization, a century earlier it was Basel that had played the modern. Compared to nearby Bern, for example, whose aggressive, martial, even imperial aspect led to the inevitable comparisons with Rome, mercantile Basel seemed the very incarnation of the modern republic.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European thinkers debated not only the merits of these two political ideals, but also their applicability to the present. For the ancient republic rested upon an agrarian economy that encouraged an ascetic subordination of individual to the common good. The self-discipline offered little to cities, whose wealth was generated by first creating new wants and then turning them into desperate needs. This was why trade was regarded in antiquity with the greatest suspicion. But anyone looking around Europe in the seventeenth century would have seen that the number of republics could be counted on the fingers of one hand: Venice, Lucca, Genoa, the Swiss cities, the United Provinces. And these polities had survived almost entirely because of their commercial character.

So where had the republics of yesteryear gone? Nostalgic readers of Livy may have lamented their disappearance, but hard-headed followers of Cicero and Tacitus had the answer. The trend away from arbitrary rule, the increasing importance of commerce everywhere, and the decreasing importance of citizen participation everywhere had eliminated the substantive differences between self-governing cities and monarchies. Republics, they argued, had not disappeared. Quite the contrary. Europe's governments were now all republics, but of a decidedly "modern" cast.

FOR NEARLY TWENTY years now, a group of scholars associated with the University of Cambridge—including Istvan Hont, Richard Tuck, Michael Sonenscher, and Béla Kapossy—have been developing this far-reaching re-interpretation of the Enlightenment in Europe. They began with Scotland, whose famous thinkers, a murderer's row of philosophers named Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, Ferguson, Robertson, Stewart, and Millar, first set forth a theory of political economy that was able to link discussions of politics, economics, and human nature.

Central to this Scottish view of European history is their identification of the "modern," by which they meant post-Renaissance society, with "commerce." These thinkers understood commerce broadly, as the exchange of goods, services, ideas, and sentiments; and this was possible under any form of government, whether republican or monarchical, as long as law was uniformly enforced. Such a view of history had the effect of linking the progress of society with the progress of government. And this happy consequence was what these thinkers meant by Enlightenment.

To take the measure of what the recovery of this eighteenth-century definition of Enlightenment might mean for us, consider the previously dominant interpretations of the European Enlightenment, those of Ernst Cassirer and Peter Gay. For Cassirer, Enlightenment was Kant, and its progress in Europe was the preparation for his critical turn; for Gay, it was all French and all about crushing superstition (that is, the Church). But Enlightenment was more than Kant and Germany, and it rarely, outside of the rarified salons of Paris, looked anything like the birth of modern paganism. This is where thinking in terms of "commercial society" becomes extremely valuable. For the Enlightenment was truly a trans-continental phenomenon. The historian must therefore provide an account of what Europeans across the Continent were thinking; an account that joins arguments for political reform with debates about economic policy and social thought, and connects internal affairs with international relations, and finds a place for all the thinkers important to the other interpretations—Locke, Mandeville, Montesquieu, Rousseau, the Scots, and Kant; and also explains the thinking at the heart of the two great demonstrations of Enlightenment politics, the American War of Independence and the French Revolution.

BUT THIS eighteenth-century notion of the "modern republic" also raised a number of vexing problems. First, it included lawful monarchies whose subjects, no longer citizens, did not participate in government. Aristotle, who set the terms of this debate, argued that participation in government was essential in the education of individuals to excellence, or virtue. How, then, could inhabitants of the modern republic, for whom this opportunity rarely or never existed, become excellent? Moreover, the modern republic was a society bound up by inequality. Only the fact that all men wanted different things made it possible for exchange—for reciprocity—to hold them together. But could a common good emerge from the selfish pursuit of desire? And if it did emerge, would the advent of a society in which all value was determined by supply and demand mean the end of any real notion of individual excellence?

Basel contributed to refining the terms of this great European discussion. A commercial aristocracy governed by a handful of great families, it presented a kind of living laboratory in which to reflect on these issues. It was a Baseler, Isaac Iselin, a man of letters and a champion of the Enlightenment, who looked around him and saw what he thought was the worst of both worlds: neither the rugged self-sacrifice of the ancient polis nor the active free market of Mandeville's London. He blamed the guilds, the deeply conservative social and political bloc that sought to preserve the ribbon-barons' political control (which meant damping down social upheaval) while maximizing their profit (which sometimes required upsetting the social peace). With a goal that was neither purely peace nor purely profit, Basel seemed to be limping into the future.

Iselin threw in his lot with profit—but all the while insisting on its opposite, the natural sociability of all Christians. For it was this, he believed, that could preserve Basel from lacerating social conflict, and maintain the old Aristotelian ideal of excellence without requiring the over-regulation of economic life and private initiative. Iselin, like his antagonist Rousseau, was trying to square the circle. He was aspiring to commercial society without selfishness, to the market without the relativization of virtue.

III.

GOSSMAN'S STORY STARTS where this eighteenth-century story stops. If Basel seemed modern enough in the 1770s, it appeared downright antediluvian after the French Revolution, the *levée en masse*, Napoleon, and the German Wars of Liberation. In 1815, Basel numbered only 15,000 inhabitants, just as it had in Iselin's day fifty years earlier. Of that number, only about half were citizens. By the 1870s, the percentage had dropped even lower, to barely a quarter of the population. And the narrowness extended from politics to culture. Its university was tiny—smaller even than Greifswald's, and thirty times smaller than Berlin's. The theater was dead, and the musical life was maintained as a diversion for the rich. There was no public culture, and a small-town feel at odds with the wealth and even the worldliness of so many of its more fortunate citizens.

Yet it was this backwater that bred some of the century's most radical critics. Was Basel's failure to reform necessary to

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produce the critical minds of Bachofen and Burckhardt? Gossman permits himself at least this much of reason's cunning. After fleeing to Berlin and the bright lights of the big city, and then unhappily returning home, these two intellectuals could not have been better positioned to recognize the new and transforming features of contemporary life. For Germany represented modernity to them in all its vulgarity. They knew it at the beginning of the *Grunderzeit*, the economic and political free-for-all—a Wild West at the heart of Europe, when fortunes were amassed and power consolidated in the hands of a new military-industrial elite.

In an age of bravado and building, when sensible people could believe that history was providence and that the success of Prussian arms was divinely ordained, it was easy for historical scholarship to sound like cheerleading. Even grave heads could get drawn into the orgy of presentism. Johan Gustav Droysen, the famed scholar of the Hellenistic world, proclaimed that Prussia was Macedonia, Germany was Greece, and Europe was Asia. We know that universities have often been inspired by successful worldly institutions, whether by the corporation in the United States or the public school in England. In an age that celebrated heavy industry, it is not surprising to find German professors undertaking vast learned projects that lashed together teams of scholars directed by a single will. The great Theodor Mommsen himself described historical scholarship as *Grosswissenschaft* appropriate to an age of *Grossmacht* and *Grossindustrie*, and argued without irony that it had to be "carried out by many, but led by one."

THIS WAS THE Germany that the Baselers encountered in the flesh. They reacted against it, and they justified their reaction by their more profound attachment to the Germany of the spirit. Gossman rightly emphasizes the importance of what happened early in the nineteenth century for the thinking in Basel in the late nineteenth century. The Enlightenment in its German variant was exported to Switzerland, and it furnished the conceptual vocabulary in which both Bachofen and Burckhardt were educated. And they, in their turn, at the end of the dizzying century, used that German vocabulary against German culture and German politics.

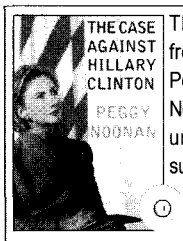
The key figure in Gossman's discussion is Wilhelm von Humboldt. It was he who formulated the notion that the objective of education was personal improvement through the realization in each individual of the highest ideal of humanity (the *humanitätsideal*). This notion of education for living has deep roots in Western philosophy, in Socrates, in the Stoics, in Montaigne; but there are aspects of this story that are particularly German. The "neo-humanism" of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries referred to the Greeks, not to the Romans, and it was expressed through art and literature, largely because of the influence of the pioneering scholarship of Johan Joachim Winckelmann and Friedrich August Wolf. As it was expounded in Berlin, moreover, this was an utterly non-political ideal. In a country conquered and occupied, or autonomous but divided, this is not so surprising. Still, the break between the traditional Aristotelian view of the relationship between politics and individual excellence, even in its reduced, early modern Italian, French, Dutch and English versions, and this repudiation of its importance altogether, was momentous.

The new Prussia that emerged from the wars of liberation claimed to make *Bildung* the basis of citizenship, at least in theory. Hence the myth, still potent during World War I, of Germany as the *Kulturnation*. A version of this same theory spread across Europe, most swiftly and completely in the German-speaking lands. In Basel in 1817, for example, the *gymnasium* was introduced. But in keeping with the city's commercial orientation, a special track was created for those destined for worldly careers. More distinctive still was the decision to create an entirely new institution, the *Pädagogium*, whose curriculum included the classics but was explicitly oriented towards the education of the so-called *Nichtstudierende*, or those not studying—the sons of businessmen, for whom this stage marked the termination of their formal education.

In Basel, of course, neo-humanism had to share the stage with practical concerns; but the irony is that it was in Basel that neo-humanism survived longest. In Germany, by contrast, where the Greeks reigned unopposed, Humboldt's ideal was almost immediately swamped by the demands of Providence: Prussia's armies and universities needed experts, not sages.

YET THE DIFFERENCE between the German Enlightenment as it was preserved in Basel and as it was lived in Berlin was reflected in differing conceptions of philology.

Is philology a guide to living well or an instrument of higher science? More fundamentally, what is philology? First and most simply, it is the study of texts. But texts cannot be understood apart from their relevant contexts, so philology could, and almost immediately did, claim for itself a kind of universal purview. For how can one understand a book without



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understanding its language, and how can one understand its language without understanding those things in the world to which it refers: events, but also clothes, customs, calendars, foods, laws, sports, religions, and all the other institutions of human life?

This, and nothing less, was the challenge posed by the Roman texts that had been discovered or re-discovered in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That is why philology lies at the heart of the historical revolution that was the Renaissance. Those who recovered us the works of Cicero, Quintilian, Tacitus, and others were soon forced to become historians of the ancient world in order to understand what their authors were talking about. And in doing this, they also became the first archaeologists, since some ancient words that referred to things in the world could only be understood if those ancient things were themselves known. Sometimes it was only a chance discovery that unlocked closed doors in texts. Sometimes it took decades of unbroken labor.

THIS MOVEMENT FROM the word to the thing made these early textual scholars into a kind of historian called the "antiquary." More people are familiar with this figure through George Eliot's wicked, brilliant portrait of Edward Casaubon in *Middlemarch* than through contact with the early modern sources on which she drew, such as the life of the Huguenot giant of erudition Isaac Casaubon. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, the antiquary actually stood at the forefront of the new learning. He had become master of the many ways in which the past could be studied, the true forefather of the modern disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, art history, classics, history of religion, and social history, as well as of the so-called "auxiliary sciences" (codicology, numismatics, meteorology, and paleography) and also "connoisseurship."

The antiquary sought to elucidate the structures of every day life by examining the broadest range of remains, whether visual, textual or material. In his methods and in the scope of his inquiries, he went beyond the typical practice of the contemporary historian, who was concerned rather with political events (kings and battles) and in molding this narrative to the needs of policymakers or moralists. And, having begun with the explanation of ancient Greece and Rome, antiquaries followed the great trend of the times and soon turned their attention to the non-classical worlds of the Near East, Asia, and the Americas. The historian of history, looking back from today, sees in the antiquary's daily labors nothing less than the origins of cultural history.

This was one of the casual but immensely fruitful asides tossed off by Arnaldo Momigliano, the great Piedmontese-born historian of ideas. In the nine-going-on-ten volumes of his collected essays, *Contributi alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, he offered tantalizing traces of a history that he never did write: the history of cultural history. But his own essays marked the trail for those who came later. From the famous heroes of the Renaissance (Valla, Poggio, Machiavelli) to the unsung ones of the seventeenth century (Scaliger, Casaubon, Peiresc) to the greatest of the Enlightenment's greats (Vico, Herder, and Gibbon) and on towards the present, Momigliano showed how the history of methods and questions added up to more than merely prying free another victim or two from Time's ravenous maw. And in Momigliano's "unwritten history," Johan Jacob Bachofen and Jacob Burckhardt occupy an important place.

Gossman helps us to understand how the unseasonableness of Basel can explain the political orientation of its famous sons. But what about their methodological innovation? Does it also have anything to do with Basel's eccentric position with respect to Germany?

IV.

BACHOFEN RETURNED FROM Berlin to Basel in 1841, a young man of twenty-six, to begin what looked to be a promising career. In short order he was named to a Professorship in Roman Law, a judgeship on the Criminal Court, and a seat in the Senate. Yet this rapidly gained glory unraveled almost as quickly. In 1844 he resigned in a huff from all but the last position, probably scared off by a whiff of scandal. He remained in Basel for the rest of his life, something of a recluse in his own town, writing and thinking in ways that became increasingly more personal and idiosyncratic as time went by.

The feeling of isolation, as the example of Bachofen illustrates, has its advantages as well as its drawbacks. Fernand Braudel, the great twentieth-century French historian of the early-modern world, wrote his famous book on *The Mediterranean in the Age of Philip II* in a German POW camp; and later, whenever he encountered an academic book original in its entire conception he would ask whether it had been written in prison. Bachofen's *Das Mutterrecht*, or *Mother Right* (1861) and *Griechische Reise*, or *Greek Travels* (1851, but not published until 1927) are his prison books.

Why did Bachofen secede from his world? He was aghast at the frenzy of short-term gratification that he saw devouring Switzerland's neighbors. Even dear, sweet Italy had succumbed. The Risorgimento brought Italy not only into the Europe of states, but also into the Europe of mass culture and mass consumption. "Everything is so stable and degraded and ruled by fashion." The culprit was the headlong pursuit of wants that were magically transformed into needs. Market-driven society, as opposed to the residually feudal Old Regime, was egalitarian, but only by leading everyone and everything down to the level of the *demos* rather than up to that of the *aristoi*.

As if in reply, the aristocratic republican Bachofen gravitated to an antiquity in which all was whole and lasting. *Das Mutterrecht* expounds a history of the evolution of society from primitive "Hetaerism," or the law of nature, the body, and the eternal cycle of birth and death, to patriarchy, the rule of law, and then finally (the inevitable Hegelian climax) the redemption of nature by spirit and the conquest of death. Bachofen "proved" this law of development by references to ancient texts and monuments, but also by drawing on modern ethnographies. Here he followed in the footsteps of the Renaissance philologists whom he studied as a younger man.

Those earlier authorities had recognized that one could travel through space in order to go back in time. Bachofen promised no less than the reconstruction of an archaic humanity in which the mother ruled alone in the family, gave her name to children, transmitted property, and played the dominant role in the clan. "An air of tender humanity, discernible even in the facial expression of Egyptian statuary," he wrote, "permeates the culture of the matriarchal world. And now an aura of Saturnian innocence seems to surround that older race of men who, subordinating their whole existence to the law of motherhood, provided later generations with the main features of their picture of the silver age ... those pictures of lost happiness that always center around the dominance of motherhood."

All this was sanctified, justified, and magnified through religion—and so Bachofen can legitimately be seen as being also another sort of pioneer, as a historian of religion. In his work, classical culture as such emerges as the outcome of a struggle with the "antiquity of antiquity," in which the world of the mothers was destroyed and overcome. The great classical fifth century of the Greeks that was so much admired by Bachofen's German colleagues now appeared as a destructive "modernity." Well before Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, Bachofen painted a portrait of Greek culture as a confrontation between

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the sterile rationality of Socrates and the creative forces of the Dionysian and the Apollonian.

BACHOFEN'S WORK PROVOKED the expected howls of derision from the community of classical scholars, but it has over time gained an audience of its own (albeit one inclined to the New Age). Gossman is himself the author of a study of Bachofen's relations with Theodor Mommsen, whom he made into the representative of all that he detested about modern historical scholarship and the modern society that it served. Mommsen first attacked Bachofen in 1851; and for the next two decades Bachofen nursed his hatred in various private communications—complaining, for example, that "it is impossible to fight successfully against an entire insurance company of scientific—or rather unscientific—cliques."

The shape and the substance of *Das Mutterrecht* and Bachofen's later works on ancient symbolism was an attack on the way that history was done in Berlin, the capital of Bismark's new state. Nor should we deem as mere coincidence Bachofen's origins, for he himself linked forms of government to forms of scholarship. In 1862, he remarked, "I intend to show the rabble of court councilors in those petty German capitals that, even in its decline, republicanism still preserves a healthier outlook than the mean resentment of everything that once was great on this earth, which in the present condition of general decay is spreading everywhere."

Against all this enervating modernity, Bachofen proposed to get back to an almost pre-historical age for which the methods of the *Grosswissenschaftler* were simply too gross. *Das Mutterrecht* could be read as an attempt to produce a "scientific" rendering of the first part of Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*: a study of the submerged pre-history of the family and its social world. Bachofen's account of his trip to Greece in 1851 is an attempt to try and touch that deepest past. The experience of travel only confirmed for Bachofen the enormous distance separating past and present: "How far our spirit has diverged from that of antiquity! How incapable we are, for that reason, of grasping that ancient world." This sense of distance is something that all good historians experience, and the better the historian the more acutely it is felt. And yet, since the Renaissance, scholars have put their faith in philology's magic touch. Bachofen wrote:

> Whoever would understand a people must adopt the standpoint which that people itself occupied and whoever would write its history must work out of its spirit and not out of his own. He must not let himself be ruled by the views of the nineteenth century, but must appropriate those of the Romans, and see with their eyes.... The only value for us is in rediscovering the views of the Romans themselves, knowing what *they* thought of their origins, what *they* knew, what *they* believed. That is my position.

After Hegel, it was harder to make this argument unselfconsciously. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), he had thrown up a roadblock on this avenue to the past. No matter the effort, Hegel asserted, the past could only be recovered in its external form shorn of meaning, like a husk without a core. It was just this impossible chasm that Bachofen claimed to bridge. He felt able to do so because he, too, walked in a world inhabited by the divine. "Whoever mocks his own religion cannot respect that of the Ancients." Hence his contempt for the interpretations proposed by his atheist colleagues.

Bachofen also attributed his success—such as it was: the learned world is still not rushing to embrace his conclusion—to his particular method. "If we wish to return" to this distant time, he concluded, "we must first lose ourselves." This psychological dimension explains his utter hostility to the Prussian School. He was not merely opposing *Bildung* to *Wissenschaft*; he was also preferring an intuitive, even mystical, approach to evidence over a rational one. Bachofen described two ways of knowing, the labor of the scholar and the experience of the traveler. "Aroused by direct contact with the ancient remains, the imagination grasps the truth at one stroke, without intermediary links." Not surprisingly, he was thrilled by ruins. Their very incompleteness allowed space for the imaginative flight of reconstruction and identification. Knowledge, for Bachofen, was indistinguishable from feeling.

V.

BACHOFEN'S "ROMANTIC antiquarianism" led him to redefine the historian's goal as the understanding of what people living in their time thought about the events of their time. This has the effect of making all history into cultural history—the history of the traditions that people develop to explain their world to themselves. In Bachofen's case, the reaction to Prussianism and to modernity issued in an emphatic affirmation that history is not only an account of winners. Yet Bachofen's eccentric path to this conclusion made him a marginal figure. How many historians today, however broad the house of history now is, teach their students to lose themselves?

Burckhardt is another matter entirely. Perhaps Gossman's work will provoke some reassessment of Bachofen's work, but none such is required for us to recognize the importance of Burckhardt. His student Heinrich Wölfflin called him a kind of patron saint of Basel, and so he remains. Burckhardt was prodigiously talented in many areas: sketchbooks of music, drawings, and verse survive, and he nursed an early ambition to be a poet. One of his friends wrote of him that "I have never known a more gifted person." This Burckhardt remains relatively unknown, especially to the English-reading public; but he fills a seven-volume biography by Werner Kaegi that is in itself a classic of scholarship, and ten volumes of collected correspondence.

In Berlin, he, like Bachofen, encountered and stumbled over the Prussian School of historians who sought to synthesize Herder's respect for the diversity of cultures with Hegel's vision of history as the consecration of God's plan for Prussia. Still, the return to the claustrophobic philistinism of Basel rankled him. "Basel strikes me as so tedious and mean-spirited that I am grateful to the good Lord for granting me even a winter in Berlin. No decent person can stand it for long here among those purse-proud merchants." It was in these years, just before 1848, that Burckhardt planned a "Library of Cultural History" that would publish little, inexpensive books on important subjects for non-specialists. The collaborative project came to nought, but each of the topics proposed eventually became the subject of one of his own monographs: the Age of Pericles became *The Cultural History of the Greeks*, the Age of Raphael *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, and the late Roman Empire *The Age of Constantine the Great*.

FOR BURCKHARDT, AS for many of his generation, it was the experience of 1848 that was decisive in separating him from the optimistic aristocratic liberalism of the 1830s. He could no longer agree with his teachers that the course of history was identical with Progress. "The messianism, nationalism, and militarism he sensed among the German radicals of 1848," Gossman observes, "filled him with misgivings and led later to his well-known predictions of despotic and militarist regimes to come once nationalism and democracy had triumphed." The Franco-Prussian War, for Burckhardt as for Bachofen, foreshadowed a cataclysmic future. In a new age of nationalist wars and class conflicts, he feared that the better sort might choose to

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accept a harsh authoritarian regime to protect them from an even worse chaos.

Soon there would be no alternatives, just complete democracy or absolute despotism. "One day the dreadful capitalism from above and the driving desire from below will run into each other like two express trains on the same track." He feared the creation of a new Leviathan—*Eins und Alles*, he called it—that would reduce the state to an army and its citizens to a vulgar, homogeneous mass of foot soldiers. And as much as he was concerned about Europe's grim political future, he was equally disgusted by the impact on intellectual life of all that levelling egalitarianism and its concomitant conformism. He singled out the corrupting role of the press. In the *feuilleton* pages of the daily paper, novels appeared in serial form "sandwiched between fashion news and reviews of the latest shows." "No tyranny," he concluded, "is worse than that of the journalist."

Alas, Saint Jacob associated this with the presence of Jews in journalism, and the professionalization of scholarship with the presence of Jews in the professoriate. They gravitated to these fields because of their nature as creatures of the metropolis, the *Grossstadt*, that Burckhardt saw as the antithesis of what he called "the culture of Old Europe." He sniffed contemptuously at all Jews for the ostentatious display by some of them of their new riches: "For the wealthy Jew/Only caryatids will do." When the catastrophe came, of course, it was worse than anything that Burckhardt could have imagined—but its backers availed themselves of this older language of aristocratic conservatism. *Jüdischer Feuilletonismus* was what they denounced. And the American was just as bad as the Jew. For across the water, the future was already at hand. In Burckhardt's view, "the American man of culture"—Bachofen had referred to the "American man of feeling" and was an even more bitter critic of market society—had no community, and related to art and literature only shallowly, as trophies: he wanted "to keep art and poetry as a luxury item."

Matchbook Hymn

Ivy, for scaling.
Iceplant, for creeping.
Green shields; green spears.
A family lies sleeping.

New runners; fresh shoots.
Ivy, for screening.
Downslope a man kneels.
Iceplant, for hedging.

Blast-furnace summers.
Tinderbox evenings.
Ivy, for braiding.
Iceplant, for weaving.

Hazy sun; sooty sky.
What's the radio saying?
Ivy and iceplant.
A woman keeps pacing.

A house on a hillside.
Dry annuals flaring.
Ivy, for grasping.
Iceplant, for reaching.

David Barber

Burckhardt's whole enterprise as a scholar and a lecturer, Gossman writes, was "an act of resistance to that modern way of life." The early project of a "Library of Cultural History" reflected a commitment to the idea that a non-specialist audience can handle serious ideas and benefit from thinking about them. This guided Burckhardt's practice as a historian, too. Not only were his few published works aimed at a general readership, but he took his responsibilities as a teacher extremely seriously. In the obituary that he wrote for himself, as was the Basel custom, Burckhardt explained that "he devoted himself exclusively to his task as teacher... He believed he should see the obligation of his university chair, as befits the needs of a fairly small university, less in the communication of specialized knowledge than in a general awakening of his students to an historical way of looking at the world." Here Burckhardt acknowledges the continuing importance for him of Humboldt's ideal of *Bildung*, in order to create a common ground in a merchant republic such as Basel.

For as much as he complained about his fellow burghers, Burckhardt, like Max Weber some turbulent decades later, showed a real understanding of the nature of business. The merchant class in Basel, he explained in a letter in 1870, was "a noble exception in its participation in non-business affairs. Yet among them I find so many individuals who have formally abjured all reading." Though they claimed "'with regret'" that they had no time, the fact of the matter is that they had no inclination, "and the way business is conducted nowadays one cannot hold it against them." Those running big concerns lived "an unending race" that left no release from the cares of the office, "even when one goes home in the evening."

These men and their wives were Burckhardt's primary audience. If we wish to understand the particular shape of his intellectual production, we must recognize that Burckhardt wrote not for the professors of Berlin but for the CEOs of Basel. And it is a fascinating comment on the evolution of academic scholarship over the past century that work shaped by the demands of a "popular" audience has stood up so well, and far better than most of what was produced by professionals for other professionals.

Burckhardt did publish, of course, and two of his works won for him outstanding fame, *The Cicerone: An Introduction to the Enjoyment of the Art Works of Italy* (1854) and *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). *The Cicerone*, through many subsequent re-editions, educated generations of Europeans in the pleasures of art. That Burckhardt put "enjoyment" in the title is a sure sign that he did not see his readership in the professoriate.

The Cicerone has not worn well. Nowadays it is read only by those who want to know about Burckhardt's judgments of Italian art and not by those interested in the works of art themselves. But *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, by contrast, has grown in reputation. It is a much more ambitious book. Taking in not only art but all manifestations of Italian life in these centuries, it draws on evidence from the realms of politics, philosophy, literature, and religion, as well as art, to paint a portrait of what it meant and felt like to be an Italian in the Renaissance. Its first two sections, "The State as a Work of Art" and "The Individual as a Work of Art" are themselves minor classics.

Nowhere is Burckhardt's commitment to the individual's freedom to create, and his ambivalence about the Aristotelian vision of politics as a necessary training for individual excellence, more apparent. Burckhardt's "moderns," the Renaissance men whom we still celebrate for their surpassing genius, first appear in the despotisms that replaced—generally by subversion or conquest—the popular communes of the thirteenth century. One hundred and forty years later, Burckhardt's Italian Renaissance is still the one on which serious students cut their teeth, though how aware they are of the argument about politics that Burckhardt is making beneath the surface of his history is open to question.

Both of Burckhardt's published works

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are shaped by the practice of helping nonspecialist audiences in Basel to experience the fascination of learning from the past. If there is a moral in this story, it is twofold: that complex ideas can be conveyed in some detail to suitably motivated non-professionals, and that too much concern about being at the cutting edge of debate may be the surest way of being left behind by Fortune's hare.

BURCKHARDT'S SERIES OF Basel lectures was published posthumously, and the most important have been translated into English. *On History and Historians* (*Historishe Fragmente*) includes the lectures that were delivered between 1865 and 1885, and presents a history of Europe from antiquity through the French Revolution. Burckhardt's analysis of the place of the Revolution in the politics of the nineteenth century is brilliant, and in the narrow compass of a few pages he manages to sketch out themes that remain the basis of modern politics: the power of the state, nationalities, public opinion, business, and communication.

Between 1866 and 1873 Burckhardt lectured on *On the Study of History*. Translated into English as *Reflections on History*, this volume represents Burckhardt's considered views on how to think about history. Here Burckhardt formulates his celebrated theory that history is driven by the interaction between the spheres of the state, religion, and culture, the latter being the only sphere in which individuals are free, even if it is necessarily bounded by its relationship to the two other spheres. The lectures on *The Cultural History of Greece* were delivered between 1860 and 1870. Although Burckhardt seems to have prepared a fair copy for publication, it appeared only posthumously (and in English only last year). In these lectures, especially in the introduction, Burckhardt offered his most coherent theoretical statement of what he understood by "cultural history," which was the true object of all his writings. "Cultural history," he declared, "has as its object the inner life of past humanity and it describes how that humanity existed, desired, and thought, how it looked upon the world and how it was able to act on it." It was to be a "history of the forces" that have acted in history.

Sometimes, when Burckhardt talks about "forces," or invokes "the Eternal Greek," or presumes the coherence of the whole, he sounds like the Hegelian that he denied. Unlike Hegel, however, the "spirit" that mattered for Burckhardt was the human one. He denied that historians could try to see into the mind of God. It was just as awe-inspiring, and much more practical, to study the achievements of those who were created in God's image. The cultural historian did not have much in common with the philosopher-theologian (Hegel) or the positivist historian (Mommsen). His aim, in Buckhardt's words, was "to make us not shrewder (for next time) but wiser (forever)." Burckhardt's project of educating the gentlemen-citizens of Basel, and his blend of stoicism and skepticism, stand close comparison with another learned aristocrat's project to educate "our" gentlemen: the essays of Michel de Montaigne.

The traces of Burckhardt the philosopher make more disappointing the absence from Gossman's pages of a serious discussion of his fascinating friendship with Nietzsche, who came to Basel as Professor of Greek and left as a philospher of the future. During his Basel years, their work dovetailed. In his lectures—not even mentioned by Gossman—on "The Encyclopedia of Classical Philology" (1871) and "The God-Worship of the Greeks" (1875), Nietzsche sketched a new, philosophically awakened practice of philology that, like Bachofen, takes symbols seriously, and, like Burckhardt, places philosphy within ancient life as a whole.

In "The Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life" (1874), the second part of his *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche returned to Burckhardt's question of how knowledge of the past should help us to live in the present. It has been suggested that his withering portrait of the antiquarian was modeled on his friend Burckhardt. Nietzsche denounced this type of scholar, who "devours with pleasure even the dust of bibliographical quisilia." He sent Burckhardt a copy of the essay; and the thank-you note that he received back suggests that the likeness was recognized but not appreciated. As Nietzsche slipped further away from Basel, he promoted his new, post-antiquarian philology into the foundation for a great departure in philosophy.

VI.

IT IS STILL hard, a century later, to get from Rome to Berlin without going through Basel. Bachofen, Burckhardt, and Nietzsche continue to shape so much of our thinking about the persistence of the antique. And as this fine book reminds us, they also worked out a conceptual language for understanding how modern Europe developed out of the city-states of the Renaissance. Bachofen and Burckhardt, Gossman's real subjects, were Baselers of the old order: committed to the compromise between commercial society and the paternalistic polis that Isaac Iselin had limned a century earlier. Where Bachofen retreated from political and academic society and made a mystical and romantic attempt to leap back over the disillusioning present to the pristine past, Burckhardt sought arms with which to beat modernity back.

The received view of Burckhardt is of a "conservative." But Gossman's presentation makes clear that his writing and lectures were a form of resistance. If modernity appealed to man's animal desire for gain and security, something that could unite Basel's barons and its barrel-makers, then Burckhardt would emphasize both culture as the totality of life and—to keep the aristocracy aristocratic, or excellent—culture as the highest refinement of human potential. Those ideals are only apparently contradictory. On a more fundamental level, they cohere in a common vision of culture as the domain of the free and the creative, even as the domain of the essentially human.

This was a vision that could be deployed as an alternative to the mechanization of daily life and thought in the new world of increasingly manic consumption. In recognizing the creative as the human, and in giving this identification a history, Burckhardt was providing Basel's burghers (and, through posthumous publication of so many of his lecture texts, a wider reading posterity) with the resources that they needed to fend off the blandishments of the present. Burckhardt was right when he wrote in 1872, about living in a society dominated by the politics and economics of the mass market, that "we are just at the beginning of it." We are now in the middle of it—which is why Gossman's book is so timely, or *zeitgemäss*. In Basel, untimeliness was a great compliment, a demonstration of depth.

All these things looked a little different viewed from Boston in the Age of Burckhardt. For all his conservatism, Henry Adams's encounter with modernity led neither to romantic antiquarianism (though his Mariolatry comes close to Bachofen's mother worship) nor to an intensified commitment to those very liberal arts that were under siege in a market society. Quite the contrary. Though perhaps he was the least American of Americans, Adams nevertheless looked into the future, when it stared him in the face in Chicago in 1893 and in the Hall of Dynamos in Paris in 1900, with a certain kind of optimism. The very act of writing his life in order to capture the centrifugal forces of modernity that shaped it, and to master them by reducing them to a unity, reflects some confidence that meaning could be discerned. But could Adams have understood the changing world around him quite so well without that *Bildung* whose obsolescence he so confidently proclaimed? ■

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LONDON DIARIST

Hit Parade

MY NEIGHBORHOOD IS long gone. It was headed toward yuppiedom, I suspect, even before Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts frolicked through its bustling streets and gated gardens in last year's *Notting Hill*. This two-mile-long patch of West London, which Dickens once dubbed "a plague spot," was home to joblessness and race riots as late as the 1960s. "Everything was cheap and grotty in Notting Hill," the journalist Phillip Knightley wrote last year. "Crumbling stucco, flaking paint, rubbish-filled streets, smelly cafés, and prostitutes on every corner."

BUT THAT NOTTING HILL HAS VANished. Today the area is cluttered with the signposts of Bobo culture: organic health-food emporiums, haute French boutiques, forbidding used-book stores accessible by appointment only. With its undulating streets, Crayola townhouses, multiple Starbucks franchises, and innumerable Americans, Notting Hill less resembles its former self—or even the rest of London—than it does San Francisco.

EXCEPT FOR ONE LONG WEEKEND AT the end of each summer, when the neighborhood pays homage to its roots with a two-day street festival. In the mid-'60s, West Indian immigrants began holding yearly parades down Ladbroke Grove, one of Notting Hill's main arteries, in an effort to boost morale and ethnic pride. The Labour government, seeking to soothe London's racial tensions, pledged support for the event, which soon became a civic fixture. The Notting Hill Carnival is now the city's largest public party, a neighborhood-wide debauch of steel drums, jerk chicken, and lager. This year's carnival drew two million people to an area no larger than New York's West Village. Though organizers and the police both expected the monstrous turnout, neither imagined it might lead to trouble.

BUT, FROM THE MOMENT I VENTURED into the teeming mass on a Monday afternoon, it was clear the carnival was a recipe for mayhem. The crowd was full of drunk Londoners—many of them, in the fine tradition of English hooliganism, bellowing football anthems and strewing beer cans in their wake. Spectators lined the street 20 deep, making it impossible to glimpse the cavalcade of gauche costumes, garish headdresses, and half-clad dancers that sashayed down the road. The police had closed off so many streets that revelers formed a suffocating tangle of bodies along the parade route. (I was on my way to a friend's apartment, but the 15-minute trip took me two hours to navigate.) The cheapest thing to eat or drink was the beer sold by enterprising vendors, who had snapped up all the provisions at the local supermarkets only hours before. It was not yet dark, but the streets—many of which were only sparsely policed—already looked ominous.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE newspapers reported that all had gone well. They quoted festival promoters marveling at the impressive crowds and the cultural spectacle, still going strong after 30 years. There were a handful of miscreants and a few arrests, of course, but nothing out of the ordinary. Only later did the truth emerge: The carnival had witnessed 19 stabbings, 69 assaults, 130 arrests, 278 reported crimes, and, as it wound down on Monday evening, two murders. Comparisons to the wilding that marred this summer's Puerto Rican Day parade in Central Park were hard to avoid: TV footage showed marauding toughs terrorizing bystanders and flashing knives; the search for an explanation—and the perpetrators—turned up largely race bait. Disgruntled London cops leaked documents revealing that law enforcement authorities, wary of stoking racial antagonism, had suggested that officers avoid making arrests. Lefty politicians countered that the police were using race to shift blame for the violence. The office of London Mayor Ken Livingstone announced a major review of the carnival—and then said the solution was to make it even bigger. "We will resist any attempt to curtail the carnival," a city spokesman said. "We would like to see it expanded . . . on a par with Rio or . . . Mardi Gras."

HEAVEN FORBID. THE NOTTING HILL Carnival should be abolished. It should be abolished not simply because it lubricates the English penchant for loutishness but because, as an ostensible attempt at cultural harmony, it is utterly self-defeating. The carnival evokes a time when the city was fiercely divided by race: Some immigrants from the West Indies and Asia—for instance, my parents—still express shock at the depth of the English racism they encountered. But today London is one of the world's most integrated cities. Chinese and Indian residents of England now earn more money than whites and have higher rates of home ownership. The captain of the English cricket team is a Madras-born immigrant. While American networks confine minority news anchors to weekend shows or cable, the faces of Britain's nightly broadcasts are, more often than not, black or Asian. Multiculturalism is practically a civic religion: Young bands meld Indian bhangra with hip-hop; West End theaters stage experimental West African plays; stodgy pubs serve the city's best Thai food.

THE NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL, WITH its antiquated insistence on the durability of difference, is an affront to this fusion. The event's premise is that, in London, West Indian culture is exotic and oppositional, peddled and consumed only on one summer weekend rather than inexorably woven into the fabric of daily life. The carnival was established to bring West Indian culture from the fringes to the cultural mainstream—but it has outlived its usefulness precisely because that goal has been achieved. Originally organized for and attended by Caribbean immigrants, today the parade essentially involves black participants performing for a mostly white audience. That's an invitation not to "integration and racial harmony," as the carnival's advertisements claimed, but to resentment. And it explains why the festival now produces the same frenzied racial monism it was created to overcome.

AT ABOUT SEVEN O'CLOCK ON THE festival's last evening, a gang of 50 black youths rampaged through the crowd, hurling bottles at Asian vendors and carnival-goers on their way home. "Let's get them," one of the youths reportedly said. Abdul Bhatti, the 28-year-old son of Pakistani immigrants, was walking with his cousin on a street just a few blocks from my apartment when the mob jumped them. Bhatti was thrown to the ground, where he was kicked and bludgeoned for several minutes. When the attackers finally fled, Bhatti stood up and staggered for a few steps, then collapsed. He died the next night. Scotland Yard investigators called the crime racially motivated. Bhatti's mother and sister, weeping and dressed in veils, spoke at a press conference. "[H]e had been looking forward to enjoying the carnival," his sister said. "But this time he did not come home." There could have been no truer sign that the party was over.

ROMESH RATNESAR

ROMESH RATNESAR is a staff writer at *Time*.

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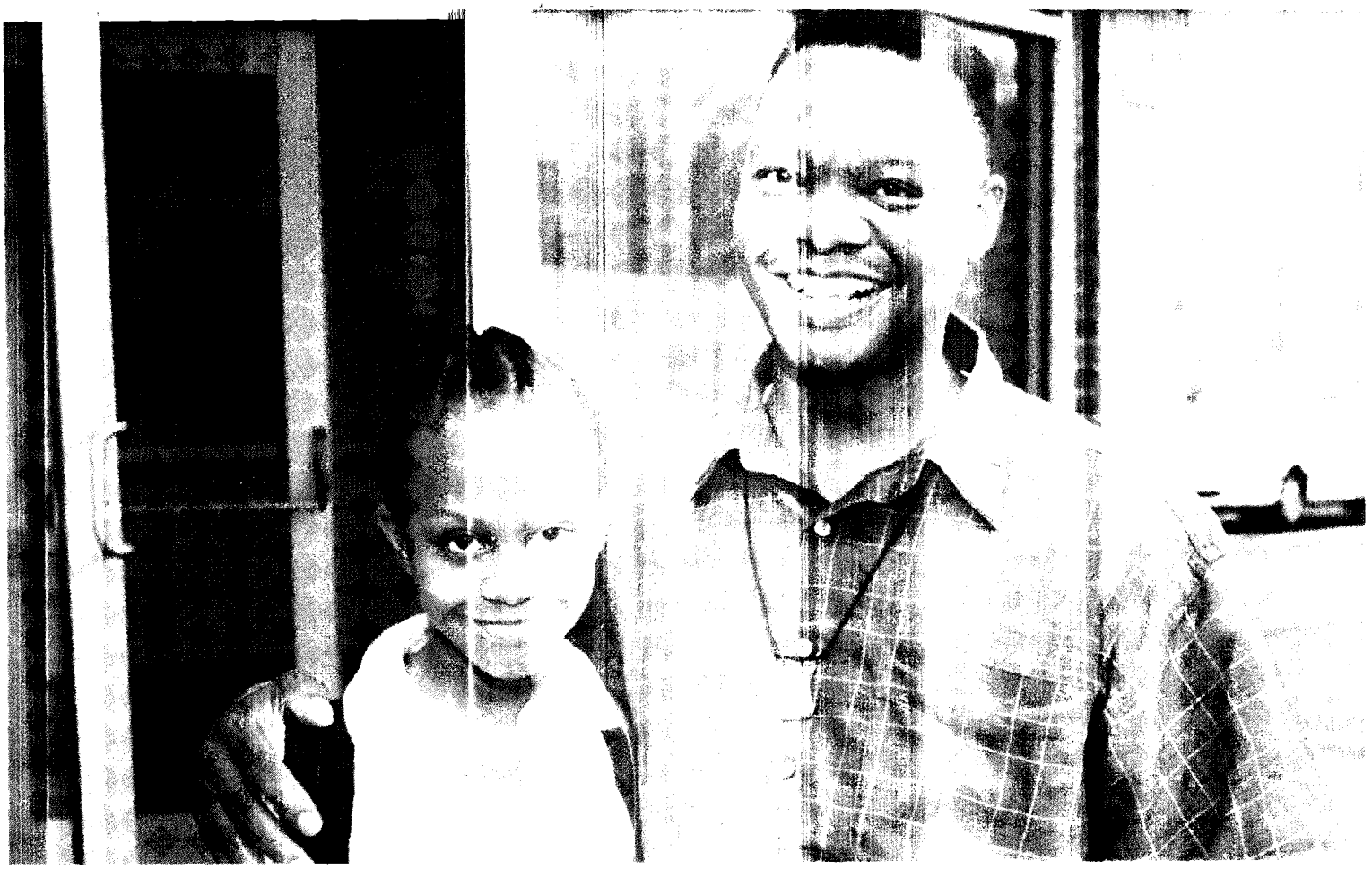

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